ISSN 0258-6150

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Developing effective forest policy

A guide

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161

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2010

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ISBN 978-92-5-106607-2

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Foreword

The battle against climate change cannot be won without the world's forests. Managing the transition to sustainable, resource-efficient and low-carbon economies will depend on forest resources, as will the scaling-up of renewable energy. The quality of life of both urban and rural people depends on their ability to enjoy food, clean drinking-water and recreation. In most countries forests can strongly contribute to all of these.

Recognizing the value and importance of forests for society and establishing sound policies to ensure this value is protected, maintained and enhanced is the task of policy-makers. Unlike in the past, when forests were often delegated to technical experts to be managed, policy-makers and stakeholders from different backgrounds now look at forests with renewed attention.

Developing policies that work in practice is difficult. It requires embracing many different and often conflicting interests of increasingly diverse stakeholders, and reaching long-term agreements that these stakeholders adhere to, as it is in their own interest. Where this process succeeds, capturing emerging trends and opportunities and linking closely with the development ambitions of the country, a new path for the management of forest resources can be established.

Many countries develop or revise forest policies to keep abreast of changing circumstances and to enhance the value of forests to society, including through support by FAO. The experience from countries and FAO shows that substantial changes have occurred since the publication of FAO's *Guidelines for forest policy formulation* in 1987, profoundly affecting not only the contents of forest policies but also the way forest policies are developed or revised.

Developing effective forest policy is published to share some of the main lessons that have emerged from these experiences, aiming to support countries in planning and conducting forest policy development processes. Based on a review of practical experiences, it outlines the rationale and purpose of a national forest policy and experiences related to the different elements a forest policy development process usually comprises. This should help senior officials in government administrations and the representatives of other stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the private sector, in developing or revising their national forest policy.

Through this publication and related capacity building support, FAO hopes to contribute to the development of forest policies that, foreseeing emerging trends, are able to affirm and enhance the value and sustainable contributions of forests to society, based on a broad agreement among stakeholders.

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Acknowledgements

This publication has been produced with the generous contribution of time and expertise by a large number of experts. Initiated by Eva Müller and Yves Dubé and based on a first outline by Neil Byron and country case studies contributed by Jean-Louis Blanchez, Materne Maetz, Manuel Paveri and Adrian Whiteman, a draft was compiled by Ewald Rametsteiner. A peer review group of experts from government, non-governmental organizations and academia was convened in Rome from 22 to 23 September 2009 to review and help improve the paper. The following members of the peer review group are gratefully acknowledged for their contributions during the meeting and comments on subsequent drafts of the report: Ramón Álvarez, Marcial C. Amaro, Alex Asare, Jean Balié, Gérard Buttoud, Bwalya Chendauka, Don Gilmour, Ingwald Gschwandtl, John Kaboggoza, Irina Kouplevatskaya-Buttoud, Godwin Kowero, Sanjay Kumar, Jan Laarman, Rocío Malleux, Eduardo Mansur, Ghalia Martini, Arvids Ozols, Hans Thiel and Victor Vidal.

The report also benefited from inputs from numerous other experts who provided written comments, including Hedi Hadri, Haluk Hilmi, Bernd Liss and Franz Schmithüsen, as well as the FAO experts Simmathiri Appanah, Patrick Durst, Claus Eckelmann, Michel Laverdière, Mikko Leppanen and Dominique Reeb. Special thanks also go to Rosalie McConnell and Andrea Perlis and for their support to editing and publishing.

Summary

Ten things to know about forest policy

1. A national forest policy is a negotiated agreement among stakeholders on a common vision and goals for a country's forests and trees, adopted by the government. It provides key strategic policy guidance and should be short and easy for a broad spectrum of society to understand.
2. Forest policy goals need to address main societal issues and be closely aligned with a country's development goals. All concerned sectors and stakeholders must be involved in achieving these goals. Such a scope requires a broad perspective of land use and natural resource management.
3. Initiating a policy revision requires a good understanding of the national context, the ability to secure support from high levels of government and key stakeholders, and an accurate assessment of the right time to establish the process.
4. Proper preparation is important, including communication and capacity building, leadership support and sound information on the status and future trends with regard to forests and social, political, economic, environmental and technological factors that determine their use.
5. Participation of key stakeholders at national and subnational levels throughout the process is key, as is joint ownership of the resulting policy and shared responsibility for policy implementation.
6. Drafting forest policy is about accommodating different interests on how to use and protect forests, interests that sometimes conflict. Reaching compromises requires good negotiation and facilitation skills rather than technical knowledge.
7. Policies that work in practice need to be designed with implementation in mind. This requires agreement on the approach and on responsibilities as well as flexibility on the methods to achieve objectives. It also needs an understanding on funding and on re-aligning legal and institutional frameworks with the new or amended policy.
8. Strong and professional communication from the outset and the building of sufficient capacity for those participating in the policy development and implementation are crucial for success. A forest policy that is neither well known nor understood has little impact.
9. The new forest policy and a strategy to put it into practice should be adopted by government at high levels so as to demonstrate commitment and guide authorities in its implementation. Non-governmental stakeholders should likewise express their commitment to both the policy and its implementation.
10. Forest policy should guide daily practice. An institutional arrangement that promotes and facilitates continuous dialogue is essential for effective implementation, operational fine-tuning, coordination with other policies, integration of new initiatives and adaptation over time.

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1. Introduction

BACKGROUND

Forests and their products and services are key for the well-being of society. They provide fuelwood for energy, timber for construction and furniture, living space and food. They also protect soil from erosion, house valuable biodiversity, are sources of income for individuals and families and offer recreation opportunities. Because of these many functions, conflicts arise on how to use forests, who can use them, who benefits and who does not. With changing societal demands, forest policies and practices have evolved considerably over time and must continue to do so to remain relevant, useful and responsive to society's changing demands. However, national policies also need to anticipate future needs and trends in order to help to shape a broader vision for the country in the years to come.

A number of developments have affected the way forests are governed, ranging from globalization, decentralization and privatization to changing demand for forest products and services from a growing and often more urbanized population. Other factors include heightened awareness of the role of forests in regulating climate and in providing other environmental services; greater recognition of the multifunctionality of forests; and a shift from timber-centred to people-centred forest management. International forest-related conventions, agreements and initiatives also contribute to bringing about change. In many ways, these often rapid developments influence a country's decision to adapt its national forest policies in order to respond to changing contexts. According to FAO (2010), 143 countries have forest policy statements, more than half of which are less than ten years old. Each year, on average, more than ten countries issue a national forest policy statement.

Many decision-makers involved in forest policy see issues emerging in the wider political context – for example those related to climate change – as opportunities to translate the value society accords to forests into concrete economic mechanisms such as payments for ecosystem services. Countries that promote more sustainable lifestyles and recognize the merits of an economy based on low carbon emissions and low energy use are looking at the potential of forests to assume a greater role in national development. If society adopts the vision of a "green economy", the benefits derived from forests can be even greater. Seizing this rare opportunity, politically and economically, requires open, inclusive and forward-looking forest policies and strategies.

Because of the multiplicity of interests and issues surrounding forests and their use, the development of an effective national forest policy benefits from and almost always requires a bottom-up and participatory approach. New actors have emerged and the roles of many traditional organizations have either been

In recent decades, much has changed in relation to forest policies, in terms of both what they address and how they are formulated and implemented.

modified or need to be reinvented. In the process, governments are assuming the task of moderator as they attempt to reach agreement among competing interests. Also, the way the decisions and activities of other sectors influence forest management is better recognized, as is the need to take future trends more fully into account.

These and other changes argue strongly for the need to reconsider essential questions when developing or revising forest policy:

- What purposes do forests serve society and how will different interests be balanced?
- Who will manage, care for and use particular forests and under what set of rules?
- How will such rules be crafted and by whom?
- How will these rules be put into practice and how will their effects be assessed?

Some of the considerations described above were addressed in FAO's *Guidelines for forest policy formulation* (FAO, 1987). However, since then many changes have taken place, often within the framework of national forest programmes (NFPs). Countries have adopted and have been using NFPs as the main approach for developing forest policies since the 1990s. In the past 20 years, more than 100 countries have gained a wide range of experience in the process of forest policy development, as has FAO through its support to member countries around the world. A range of forest policy processes at the global and regional levels has also provided valuable guidance. This document takes stock of experiences in national forest policy development since the late 1980s.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

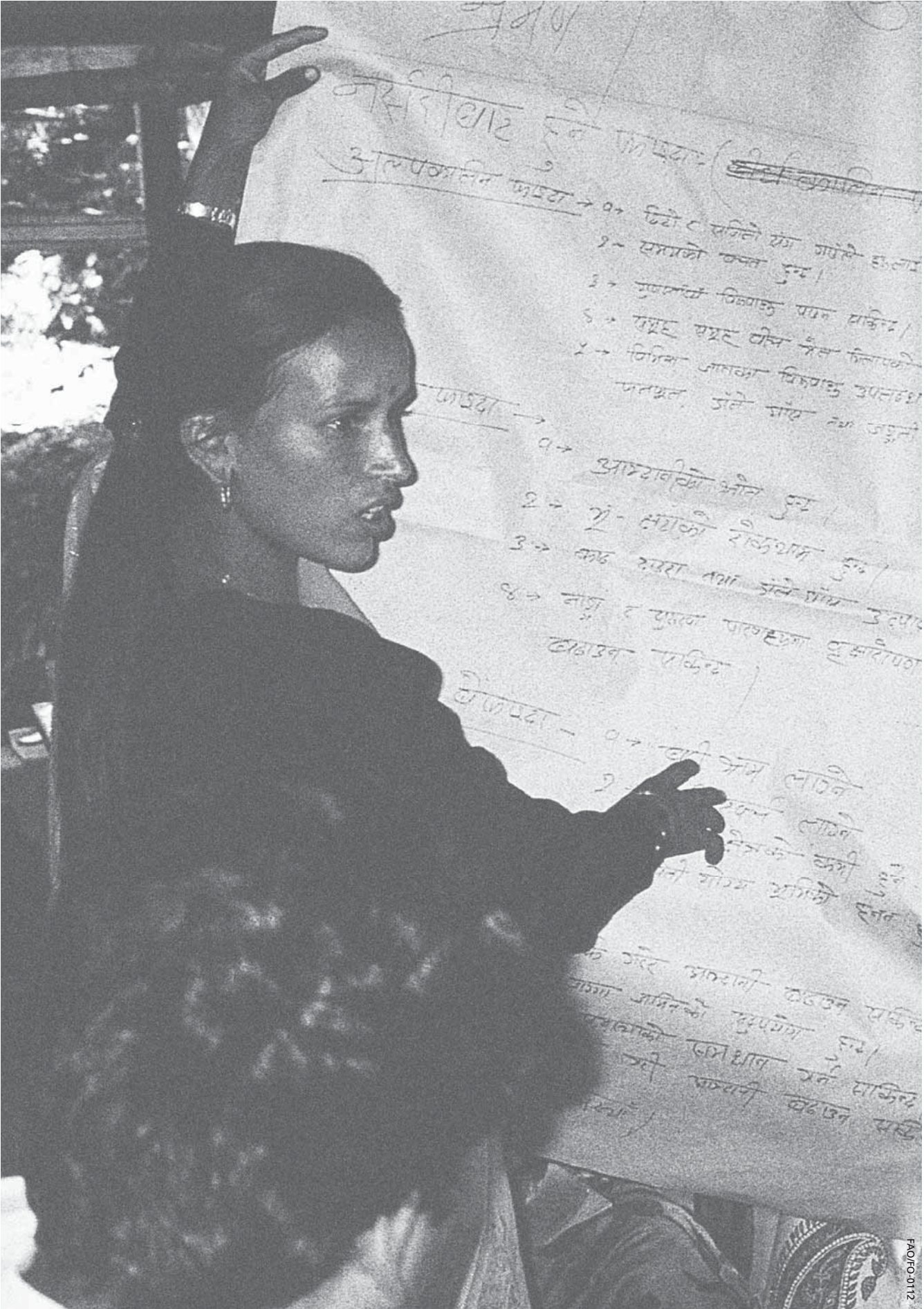
The purpose of this guide is to outline the concepts associated with forest policy development and the formulation of a formal forest policy statement, based on country experiences in recent decades. While focusing on the development and formulation of national forest policies, the guide can also be applied at subnational and local levels. Similarly, it can assist countries both to revise current forest policy and to develop and formalize a new one.

Because forest policy should reflect the particular social, cultural, economic and political context in each country as well as the unique characteristics of its forest resources and their usage, the guide is not a template for forest policy development. Rather, users are encouraged to adapt its contents to their specific needs.

The ultimate responsibility, authority and accountability for national forest policy rests with national governments and the stakeholders who help to develop and implement it – and whose actions make up the *de facto* policy. The principal intended audience, therefore, is senior government officials and the representatives of stakeholders who are involved in developing or revising the

national forest policy. It is also intended as a guide for other stakeholders, so that they can participate more effectively in dialogues about how forest should be used, particularly civil society organizations and community groups with social and environmental goals.

Policies should facilitate sound decisions on forests and trees and their sustainable use – decisions that provide the benefits that society expects. Such policies must be designed to respond to the changing needs of different groups and to emerging challenges and opportunities.



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2. What is a national forest policy?

WHAT IS A NATIONAL FOREST POLICY AND WHY SHOULD A COUNTRY HAVE ONE?

The term "policy" is not tightly defined but is used in different ways on different occasions. Often, it can mean "a course of action adopted and pursued". A policy can be explicitly stated or not. It can also be planned or it can emerge through evident behavior. It is thus often viewed either as a rational system based on deliberate aims and plans or as a consequence of political activity arising from a series of decisions. In any case, a policy needs to provide guidance and a sense of direction over a certain period of time in order to be useful. People complain that central government, a ministry or other stakeholders "do not have a policy" when decisions are made on an ad hoc basis or are incoherent or contradictory.

A policy is intended to guide and determine present and future decisions and actions. It usually comprises two elements:

- a set of aspirations, goals or objectives
- an outline of a course of action to achieve them.

In this book, a national forest policy is considered to be a negotiated agreement between government and stakeholders (i.e. all those who depend on or benefit from forests or who decide on, control or regulate access to these resources) on the orientations and principles of actions they adopt, in harmony with national socio-economic and environmental policies, to guide and determine decisions on the sustainable use and conservation of forest and tree resources for the benefit of society.

A national forest policy is not to be unilaterally imposed by government. Ideally, it is an agreement among bodies that represent different forest interests and is formally adopted by government. Who should be involved in its development is thus a key question, as the selection of the participants influences which interests are taken into account. As Byron (2006) observes, it is difficult to imagine a national forest policy that can be relevant and useful without being firmly placed within the broader aims of society. Forest policies thus not only have to cover issues under the competence of the forestry administration and its agencies, but they also need to contribute to overarching policies, including those responsible for national development or economic and poverty strategies. They also need to be consistent with policies issued by other government authorities, e.g. on environmental protection, climate change, agriculture, industry and trade. Further, they need to be in line with a country's

A national forest policy is a policy for society, not for the forestry administration.

forest-related international commitments. Thus, a forest policy is a policy for people, not for the forestry administration.

Being an agreement among government and stakeholders, a national forest policy is endorsed by government and implemented through legal, economic and informational instruments, and by other stakeholders with their respective means. Ultimately, through government endorsement, a formal national forest policy is the official position of the government, as a clear statement of a country's goals and objectives, made public so that all parties know the directions being pursued and the outcomes to be achieved.

Today, a forest policy is widely understood as a negotiated agreement among government and other stakeholders on a shared vision on forests (and trees) and their use.

If different actors each pursue their particular interests and change course frequently, larger goals or longer-term objectives are unlikely to be reached. Thus, there are a number of good reasons for jointly developing and using an agreed forest policy:

- The process of bringing stakeholders with diverse interests together to negotiate an agreement is extremely valuable in itself.
- A mutually accepted forest policy builds a sense of joint ownership, which is essential for its implementation.
- The involvement of stakeholders beyond the forest sector gives the policy legitimacy across society. Wide buy-in is particularly advantageous when negotiating with powerful ministries such as agriculture, energy, planning or finance.
- A national forest policy provides excellent guidance for developing more coherent institutional frameworks and policy instruments, including forest legislation.
- A national forest policy can guide the planning and operations of forestry stakeholders including administrations and agencies at various levels.
- A national forest policy facilitates commun-ication, coordination and collaboration across government, non-governmental organizations and the public.
- A national forest policy can provide a solid basis for international policy discussions and for strengthening technical assistance cooperation.
- The national forest policy can serve as a reference to guide decisions on emerging issues, particularly those where quick, difficult or controversial decisions must be made.

WHAT DO NATIONAL FOREST POLICIES LOOK LIKE?

A country's *de facto* forest policy is determined by the actions taken by government and stakeholders in relation to forests. It is the sum of a multitude of more or less coordinated individual policy-relevant actions by government and stakeholders. *De facto* policy evolves over time as the actions of different bodies change in response to changing circumstances.

National forest policies are formalized and issued as statements in order to spell

out a longer-term vision for the sector, guide and support strategies to achieve goals and promote concerted efforts among different bodies and decision-makers. The structure and contents of such a formal forest policy is determined by the needs of decision-makers and others who develop, agree on and aim to use it. Most important is that it be consistent with a country's unique history, culture, resources and aspirations. Thus, as one would expect, forest policy statements differ considerably from one country to another. It should also be noted that statements that focus on the history of forest management and administration, describe the sector as it currently exists or outline operational aspects of a forestry agency should not be considered forest policy.

A formal forest policy statement spells out a shared vision or goals on forests and trees and outlines the strategies for their achievement, but allows flexibility for the methods to be used.

A forest policy statement can vary from as few as ten pages (e.g. the Gambia and Mozambique) to a more comprehensive document (e.g. Cameroon, Mexico, Mongolia, Panama, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Senegal). Some countries, e.g. Canada, opt for a simple framework or "umbrella" document, making reference to the relevant codes of practice, laws and guidelines that are found elsewhere. Others incorporate their forest policies into their forest laws or into general longer-term planning documents (e.g. Thailand and Turkey), including NFPs (e.g. the Congo and Finland). A forest policy can be one statement or a coherent set of statements about a range of aspects (e.g. China, South Africa and Uganda). Whatever approach is taken, experience has shown that bulky documents, whatever their quality, are often shelved and forgotten. Forest policy statements that focus on results and provide flexibility with regard to the means of achieving them are better suited to adapt to changing circumstances and integration of experiences. A forest policy statement should avoid repeating specific guidelines and be concise enough that it can be easily read and understood by the widest possible audience.

Forest policy statements focus increasingly on expected outcomes or intended results and less on how to achieve the goals.

The scope of a national forest policy usually covers all forest resources in a country – industrial or commercial forests, private forests, community forests, agroforestry, trees outside forests, urban forests, natural forests and woodlands, for example – and their management and use, irrespective of tenure or ownership. Forest policies no longer address only the traditional aspects of forestry, but now take into account the broader needs of and benefits to society as well as the problems arising from increased pressure on a finite resource base (Box 1). Many key issues extend beyond sectoral boundaries, including the links between population changes and land use, the need to increase agricultural productivity, climate change, energy and economic/infrastructure development. The lines separating forest policy, land use policy and renewable natural resource policy thus have become blurred – more so as countries seek to harmonize their policies with the international commitments they have made.

BOX 1

Recognition of forest's broad societal role in South Africa

"Contrary to the traditional view of forestry as the science of managing forested land, forestry today is about the relationships between people and the resources provided by the forest. It includes the use and husbandry of the wood, fruits and other products that come from trees, as well as the wildlife that dwell in the forest."

Source: Government of South Africa, 1996.

Most forest policies state vision and/or goals and spell out specific objectives on a limited number of topics. As noted earlier, topics vary substantially across countries to reflect different contexts and needs. They may include the multiple uses of forest land, for example, commercial timber production, recreation and tourism, biodiversity protection, non-wood forest products, animal husbandry, agroforestry and environmental services such as water supply, erosion control, climate regulation and carbon sequestration. A review of current national forest policy statements identifies the following frequent elements:

- protecting and enhancing the extent and quality of the resource for the benefit of citizens and future generations, including productive capacity, health and vitality;
- ensuring that extraction of all products from the forest is sustainable and in accordance with laws and regulations or codes of practice, whether formal/written or informal/traditional;
- maintaining or enhancing the ecosystem services provided by forests;
- managing forest resources to produce the range and mix of goods and services demanded by society, contributing directly to national development.

Overall, the most frequently addressed issues are components of the seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management, as acknowledged by the United Nations Forum on Forests (UN, 2008): extent of forest resources; forest biological diversity; forest health and vitality; productive functions of forest resources; protective functions of forest resources; socio-economic functions of forests; and legal, policy and institutional framework. However, as this framework is broad in scope, countries often focus on more specific topics, such as land tenure, land use, climate change, employment, community forestry and forest industry.

National forest policy statements often provide guidance on how to implement the vision and objectives. They can also identify the centre of responsibility for each action stipulated. In some instances, statements will consider what resources and authority the stakeholders require to achieve what is expected of them. Historically, many forest policies were prescriptive and assigned the task of implementation to government agencies. More recently, however, the focus has shifted to a

collaborative approach involving government and non-governmental organizations alike. As a result, policies tend not to prescribe how goals should be reached, but instead specify expected results – a change that better allows stakeholders to contribute according to their respective means and to adapt the means over time, taking into account experiences and changing contexts.

Good forest policies incorporate society's needs and wider development goals. They balance different stakeholder interests and are short and easily understandable by all.

Formal national forest policy declarations generally span 10 to 20 years and must be adapted to changing circumstances to remain relevant. A number of national statements explicitly build in periodic reviews to ensure they are revised to meet new challenges and opportunities (Australia, Austria and Canada, for example).

HOW DOES A FOREST POLICY RELATE TO FOREST LAWS, NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES, STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS?

A forest policy sets out a broad vision or goal and a long-term direction about forests and their use but does not usually specify in detail the instruments or practices to implement it. One key instrument for implementing the forest policy is the forest legislation. Some countries do not have a forest policy statement and consider the legislation to contain or express the policy, providing the main framework that guides government action. However, the primary purpose of legislation is the distribution and enforcement of rights and responsibilities related to forests, not to lay down an agreed vision, goal or strategy.

Forest policy and forest law are complementary tools: the policy provides direction, and law establishes rights and responsibilities.

Does a policy have to be within the legislation or must the legislation be within the policy? Obviously, any government policy needs to be consistent with the constitution and other laws of a country. However, all laws, including those pertaining to forests, are made with certain policies in mind. Thus, a policy, i.e. an agreement on strategic direction, needs to be developed before any aspect of it can be made legally binding. After all, translating the rights and duties contained in policy into law is a technical procedure, not a political one. Thus, experts in formulating legislation will say "give me the policy and I will draft the law". In practice, wherever no such policy statement is available, revising forest legislation is a more or less explicit process of policy development and formulation. In cases where a forest policy statement has been agreed, forest legislation can be amended accordingly to implement the policy.

Legislation is usually considered a key instrument for implementing a forest policy, setting out rights and obligations and institutionalizing the rules through primary legislation (parliamentary-level) and secondary legislation (regulations, decrees, ordinances and by-laws, for example). Legislation prohibits certain conduct, provides for sanctions and offers a solid foundation for action in the face of political changes in government. However, using forest laws as the basis for policy guidance has some undesired consequences. Not all policy aspects can

be covered in sufficient detail in the legislation, and specifications in legal acts are subject to legal procedures. Thus, resorting to the judiciary is a way of delaying, if not stopping, a specific action. Moreover, legal instruments are usually inadequate in terms of providing guidance or the flexibility to address emerging issues. Neither are they easily accessible or understandable to all. Nonetheless, in the face of conflict and in the absence of other mechanisms to settle disputes, law takes precedence over policy. Only the former can be challenged through the courts for a judgment based on legislation, not policy. For these reasons, legal advisers often recommend putting no more than core rights and responsibilities into forest legislation.

Forest legislation can be drafted after policy decisions are made, not vice versa.

Table 1 summarizes the main differences between forest policy and legislation.

Sometimes legislation needs to be repealed or revised because it is out of step with the new policies, vision and goals. However, amendments may not be required to implement a revised forest policy if non-governmental entities such as forest industries undertake the major functions and if their practices are already regulated by broader laws such as those that govern planning or protect the environment.

The term "forest policy" is also sometimes confused with "national forest programme" (NFP). A term agreed by countries in the international dialogue on forests, NFP denotes a comprehensive forest policy framework built on a number of specific principles, which can be loosely clustered in three groups: national sovereignty and country leadership; consistency within and integration beyond the forest sector, and participation and partnership (FAO, 2001). This framework builds on the iterative process of developing/revising and implementing national forest policies and of translating international commitments

NFPs are a comprehensive framework for a country's forest policy. NFP processes and platforms are used to develop or revise forest policy, strategies and programmes and facilitate their implementation.

TABLE 1
Main differences between forest policy and forest law

Forest policy	Forest law
Can be adopted and amended through different procedures and by different bodies, according to each specific situation	Adopted and amended by Parliament or the Head of State through procedures determined by the Constitution or legislation
Non-legally binding	Legally binding
Provides guidance by specifying visions, goals and how to reach them	Specifies rights and duties based on a policy vision or goals
Can be general so it can be adapted to meet different and changing circumstances	Must be specific to enable judicial dispute settlement and applied universally across jurisdictions
Soft mechanisms to deal with non-compliance	Judicial powers to punish non-compliance
Amended by those bodies that adopt the policy, through their respective procedures	Constitutionally or legally determined procedure needed for amendments

into action on the ground. In this regard, many countries establish platforms, forest forums or similar multi-stakeholder mechanisms as an integral part of the framework. Thus, whenever an NFP refers to a comprehensive forest policy framework, its relationship to the policy is straightforward: the forest policy is developed or revised within the NFP framework and is an outcome of the NFP process.

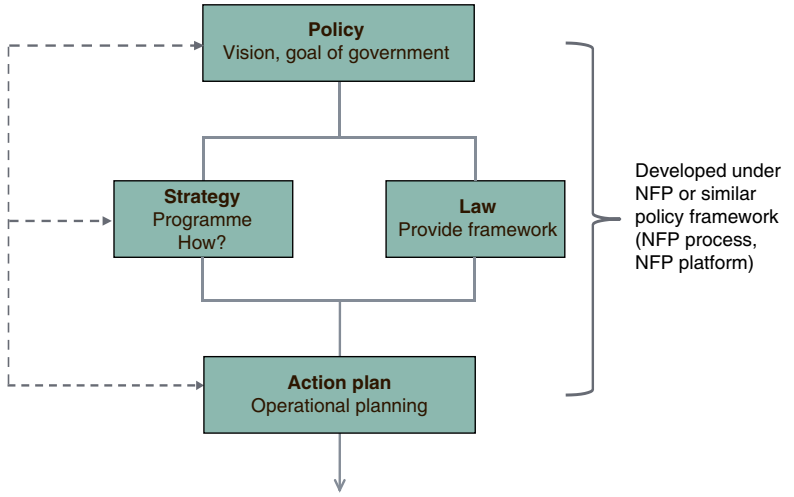
A written forest policy frequently outlines or specifies how to achieve goals or objectives through strategies, programmes or action plans. The terms "policy" and "strategy" are frequently used interchangeably. Thus, some countries specify their forest policy in a "forest strategy" (e.g. England [United Kingdom], Saudi Arabia, Serbia and Viet Nam). Similarly, a "strategy document" and a "national forest programme document" are often comparable. In some countries (e.g. Cameroon and Finland), the NFP is considered the strategic base of the national forest policy. Thus, the forest policy is laid out in the NFP document. While the terms are used loosely in practice, a strategy usually provides direction on the approach to achieve the goals and objectives set by a policy. A programme is considered more of a long-term master plan to implement the policy or strategy. "Action plans" or "work plans" are usually more specific or short term (Figure 1).

A national forest strategy or programme usually specifies a course of action to achieve the goals and objectives set in the policy.

HOW DOES A NATIONAL FOREST POLICY LINK TO OTHER POLICIES?

Forest policy-makers have become increasingly aware, especially over the past decade, that forests cannot be managed sustainably if other land and natural resource users do not recognize the importance of these resources. One reason for poor policy implementation and a lack of impact of many beautifully written policies and plans

FIGURE 1
The relationship between policy, strategy, law and action plans



in the past was that they often were out of touch with the realities around forests and the wider societal developments. For instance, in many countries, the rate of deforestation remained high despite explicit forest policies to reduce deforestation. In other cases, food production, shelter, infrastructure or broader economic development took precedence over ambitious afforestation programmes. Such examples underline the critical need to link forest policies with and to incorporate forest aspects into wider national policies – so as to make forest policies relevant and to enhance society's recognition of the value and benefits of forests and sustainable forest management. However, all too often, communication and collaboration with and among those responsible for developing and implementing these wider policies are absent.

Forest policy goals need to be clearly linked to national development strategies.

Forests contribute to human well-being more than society usually realizes, for example, in terms of food, employment and income, housing and shelter, energy and environmental security. Often these crucial aspects are not considered sufficiently or taken up explicitly in the development of forest policy. Key issues of importance to society are usually taken up in national development strategies, national economic and sustainability strategies or similar policies and plans. Thus, forest policy needs to be set and expressed in such a way that it contributes to these wider goals. By the same token, it is essential to lobby actively and persistently for the integration of forest-related matters into national development policies and strategies (Box 2).

Many actions that affect forests and trees and their use are guided or covered by policy and legislation in other spheres. Many key issues for society are in fact transversal and cut across sectors: economic and rural development, poverty reduction, food production, climate change, watershed management, energy, tourism, infrastructure development, industry and mining, education and research. It is likely that many stakeholders of sectors whose actions affect forests profoundly have never pondered questions such as "what policy do we have on forests?" or "how much forests should be retained?". To achieve reasonably well coordinated actions, many countries involve stakeholders from key sectors in revision of the forest policy.

Issues related to forests and trees, including their use, cut across sectors. Ideally, this is fully reflected in participation in the development of the forest policy and its implementation.

Frequently, government agencies and stakeholders work out solutions on a bilateral basis or coordinate policies in specific key policy areas. Specific parts of bilaterally coordinated policies thus become an integral part of forest policy, for example decisions related to livestock, agroforestry, watershed management, biodiversity protection, biomass for energy, industrial wood supply, ecotourism, deforestation and forest degradation. The interconnectedness of issues playing out on a finite land base provides further incentive for policy-makers to find inclusive and more integrated policy solutions. One approach is to develop wider natural resource or land use policies, as Finland

Policy on specific topics can be developed jointly with one or more other sectors.

BOX 2

Forest policy and the national development agenda

Integrating forest issues in broader policies addressing national sustainable development as well as the challenges associated with changes taking place at the global level may involve some risk (e.g. loss of control) but can open up considerable opportunities. For example, India, the Republic of Korea and the United States of America have linked forests and forest management to wider development agendas by making them part of "Green Deal" programmes, and Costa Rica and the Republic of Korea have made natural resources a central part of their national development strategies. Some countries push the development of innovative products and services as part of efforts to move towards a sustainable bio-based economy to tackle climate change, the economic crisis and oil depletion in a comprehensive, coordinated manner. Sweden and Nepal have coordinated forest and water policies, and Canada and others have integrated or well-coordinated forest and forest industry policies. Efforts are under way in many countries to improve integration of forest and climate change policies as well as forest and energy policies.

and Nova Scotia (Canada) have done. In practice, the implementation of different policies always requires coordination at different levels – whether they were elaborated in a collaborative way or not.

Recognition, coordination and integration of policies is important not only at the national level, but at and across all levels of government, from the local municipal level to the international level, at which a range of commitments are made. In addition to the need for policies to be coherent across sectors, they also must be consistent with constitutional frameworks and with policies set at the subnational level by decentralized structures, as well as with traditional and customary rules.

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3. Policy development in a dynamic environment

> A [policy] is like a recipe, either formulated in advance or emerging in response to events.
>
> **Gane, 2007**

Some people view policy development as a form of rational planning. Others see it as something that emerges as a consequence of bargaining and decisions by different policy-makers. In reality, policy development and its subsequent formulation are often unstructured and many layers are hidden beneath the facade of a well planned and executed process. In fact, many policy-relevant decisions are taken outside the formal process. This may lead to the impression that "policies happen" and are rarely, if ever, executed as planned.

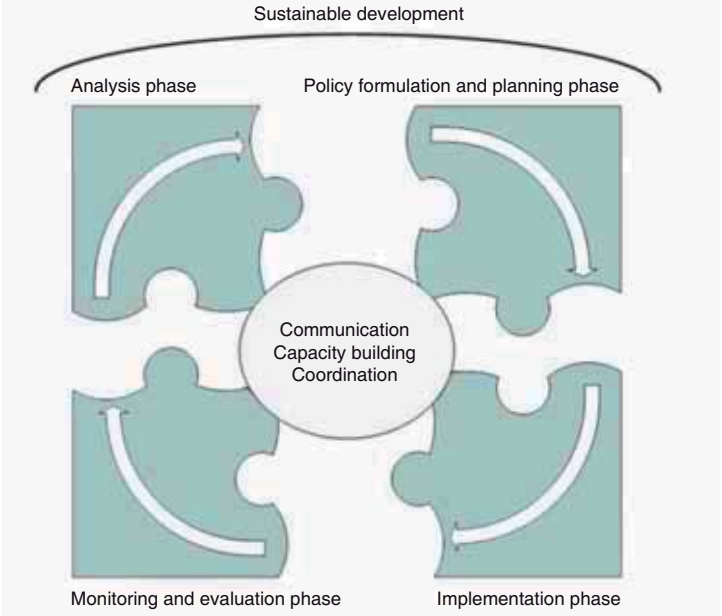
Given that a country rarely develops or formulates policy from scratch, it can be useful to conceptualize the forest policy process as a continuous cycle: forest management and administration review → policy development and formulation → implementation → evaluation → reformulation. The NFP process is based on a similar notion (Figure 2).

In most cases, the development of a formal forest policy statement starts from the need or wish to improve a current policy, be it written or implicit, because of either abrupt changes or gradual shifts in the larger context. What is less clear conceptually but evident in reality is that the process can be initiated anywhere in the cycle. The wish to develop or revise a policy might arise during implementation, after a review or when it is almost formulated, for example because of a newly established government having different policy intentions than its predecessors. Moreover, activities that occur at different times in the process are interconnected in many ways: they can run in parallel or take place in any one of the four phases. In other words, the schematic four-step approach is a simplification of what happens in practice but nonetheless can help to structure and facilitate the work that needs to be undertaken.

Development and adjustment of a forest policy is a process, with no beginning or end-point.

Policy-making is an iterative process, and it is important to view it in this light for two reasons. First, in an iterative process experiences and lessons learned can be more easily taken into account to inform and improve coordination. Second, iteration helps to maintain a dialogue on the policy and its implementation after the process of developing a formal policy has concluded. Ongoing dialogue, and an established platform for it, is often a crucial component in implementing policies, as many concrete details in the implementation of the national forest policy need to be discussed or negotiated after it has been adopted. Established mechanisms

FIGURE 2
Forest policy process



Source: FAO, 2001.

for dialogue also make it easier to benefit from diverse lessons and experiences in implementing agreed policies, and to coordinate subsequent planning.

WHAT HAS CHANGED IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT?

Participation to strengthen relevance, acceptance and effectiveness of policies

Effective implementation of policies and policy processes requires, first and foremost, synergy between State and citizens. Although a national forest administration may be the source of most technical expertise about managing forests to deliver various goods and services, it is not necessarily in the best position to determine and speak for what society wants and needs from forests. Balancing often conflicting interests is a political rather than a technical matter; one major lesson that FAO has drawn from its policy assistance to countries is that the importance of non-technical issues, knowledge and skills is often underestimated (FAO, 2008).

Experience has shown that the development of a national forest policy must be initiated and led by the country, not external parties or partners. Measures must also be taken to ensure that the process provides for sufficient participation at the national and subnational levels. Even though a strong and technically sound policy could be formulated without stakeholder involvement, participation is necessary to ensure that the policy meets the needs of society. Past approaches have taught

that policies are difficult to implement when people affected by decisions are excluded and when negotiations to accommodate competing interests take place in the absence of their representatives. Both conditions are essential if the policy is to have the broad-based support that will enable it to overcome the challenges associated with implementation, even if the process seems protracted, expensive and unruly at the start. In many countries, NFP processes and platforms for forest discussions are used to strengthen participation in policy development and formulation. The NFP provides an opportunity for stakeholders with different interests, objectives and opinions to discuss and negotiate issues, understand each other's point of view and reach consensus or compromise or agree to disagree for the time being. It also serves as a mechanism for constructive confrontation, a release valve for grievances and a communication platform to deal with and avoid misunderstandings that can lead to conflict.

Forest policy processes aim to develop and implement policies that are jointly owned and widely supported by involving a broad range of stakeholders within and outside the sector.

Policy implementation as a shared responsibility

If forest policy is an agreement between government and stakeholders, the central government need not achieve the stated goals on its own but should ensure they are implemented, as appropriate, by decentralized administrations or by other parties such as the private sector, community forestry organizations, farmers, indigenous people, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. Central authorities thus are finding new ways to coordinate across different levels after decentralization and to collaborate with stakeholders.

The diversity of public and private stakeholders involved in policy implementation calls for the need to be explicit about the division of responsibilities among different government agencies and stakeholder bodies. It also requires more efforts by government officials to coordinate and collaborate across sectors and different levels of government. These aspects become all the more important in countries that are moving towards decentralization and devolution where more levels of government share responsibility for implementation. Equally important is the need for public agencies to have goals, structures and capacities to discharge this mandate.

With conventional policy settings and institutional arrangements, governments tend to rely on regulations, control and policing for implementation. However, this approach is often incompatible with the wish and need to involve stakeholders, for example, smallholder tree growers or NGOs. Command-and-control measures alone have also been found to be ineffective in the management of valuable protected areas. New instruments, such as voluntary agreements, public-private partnerships and market-based approaches, have surfaced over the past few decades. These not only have the potential to make implementation more efficient but may also, at times, help avoid the marginalization of governmental forest administrations.

Mechanisms for continuous dialogue and periodic adjustment

Changes in the context within which forest and trees are used and managed call for periodic amendments to national forest policy and/or implementation arrangements (Box 3). Just as *de facto* policy tends to evolve with changing contexts, adaptation is also periodically necessary for formal policies. Because a formal policy is embedded in politics and is subject to election cycles and government changes, a new government could initiate revisions much earlier than initially foreseen. To ensure that a forest policy process is maintained and adaptive to changing circumstances, many countries have set up national forest policy platforms, forest forums or similar mechanisms. These facilitate continuing communication and coordination among different stakeholders, response to emerging issues and integration of experiences or new initiatives in policy adaptation.

Continuous forest dialogue is key for developing, implementing and revising policies that are consistent and adaptive over time.

BOX 3

The evolution of forest policy in Bhutan

Bhutan approved its first formal forest policy in 1974, following the 1969 Forest Act, which mandated state ownership of all forests. The policy laid out approaches to forest and wildlife conservation, afforestation, resource survey and utilization. It also set a minimum target of 60 percent forest cover.

The primary objective of the policy drafted in 1990 was conservation of the environment, and only thereafter could economic benefits be derived. However, provisions were made to supply timber to rural households on an ongoing basis. In spite of the intent to balance conservation and sustainable use, implementation tended to focus on conservation and protection.

When the national policy was reviewed in 1999, the emphasis shifted to timber marketing and pricing, subsidized timber for rural housing construction, and community and social forestry. A gradual further change in emphasis has taken place over the past decade, towards a more decentralized and people-centred approach to forest management, directed at poverty alleviation.

The 2009 forest policy responds to a growing need for a broader and more balanced approach to sustainable development and poverty alleviation, identifying food security and biodiversity protection as issues, for example. It provides a framework to address both conservation and sustainable use in areas such as community forestry, watershed management, wood and non-wood forest products and livestock management. It also provides a means to implement in a coherent manner the legislation that affects the natural resources of Bhutan.

Source: Don Gilmour, personal communication.

BOX 4

Post-crisis adjustment of forest policy in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Emerging from a decade of political turmoil, and moving away from central government planning as part of the former Yugoslavia, officials of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia realized that the country's approach to governing forests was in desperate need of revision. Although forest resources were generally in good condition, it became clear that forest management was unsustainable, and forest agencies constituted a drain on government finances. Reform of the State-owned timber enterprises seemed especially urgent to improve their viability and to deliver better forest goods and services to society. In addition, the new government sought to demonstrate its eagerness and capacity to undertake economic and social reform and to develop polices that would facilitate admission into the European Union.

CLARIFYING WHEN A CHANGE IS NEEDED – AND POSSIBLE

Not all changes that affect forests or forest management require a new or amended forest policy. However, policies sometimes need to be revised in order to guide operational decisions effectively. In the past two decades, societies have undergone increasingly rapid changes – in where people live (increasingly in cities), how they earn income and how they use natural resources, including forests. Shifts in social and demographic trends, along with changes in economic, environmental, technological and political contexts, inevitably require that policy respond to new realities, risks and opportunities (Boxes 4 and 5). Over time, any sector that does not address broader societal issues as part of its mandate or does not forge strong links to the national development agenda will be sidelined, command less attention and see its power erode – all of which will result in weaker capacity to pursue goals. The forest sector is no exception, and when ties can be strengthened by revising forest policy, it is a clear indication that change is due. Change can take different forms; it can be brought about by seizing emerging opportunities or by taking action to stop a slow but steady loss of relevance.

Over time, any sector that does not have strong links to the key societal issues and overall development agenda of its country will be sidelined, lose power and have less capacity to pursue its goals.

Since policy development is tied to the politics of parties and élites, those who lead or who should be involved are likely to have diverse views about the needs, goals, benefits and risks of embarking on such an initiative. They must assess the right time to initiate the process, determine the triggers required to get it started and consider the right pace of reform – gradual or sudden. Although there are no simple answers, a few factors can predispose government to consider policy reform:

Identifying the right moment to initiate change requires leadership and good knowledge of the policy context and players.

BOX 5

Increased pressures on Kenya's forests

Kenya's Forest Policy, 2007 notes that significant changes had taken place since the previous authoritative statement of Kenya's forest policy in 1968, necessitating a new forest policy (Government of Kenya, 2007):

"These changes include an increase in the country's population and a rise in forest related activities.... This increase in population will continue to exert pressure on the forest resources through a growing demand for forest products, services and land for alternative uses. The need to conserve the soil, water, wildlife habitats, and biological diversity will become even greater. Further, since 1968, the country has experienced a major decrease in forest cover, which has resulted in reduced water catchment, biodiversity, supply of forest products and habitats for wildlife. At the same time, the forest sector has been beset by conflicts between forest managers and forest adjacent communities over access to forest resources. Consequently, it is necessary to prepare a new Forest Policy to guide the development of the forestry sector. The broad objective of this new Forest Policy is to provide continuous guidance to all Kenyans on the sustainable management of forests. The Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1968 did not provide for adequate harmonisation between resource policies. This policy has taken cognizance of other existing policies relating to land and land use, tenure, agriculture, energy, environment, mining, wildlife and water. Further, this policy stresses the need for greater cooperation and linkage among resource owners, users, and resource planners. The policy incorporates the present forest-related values of the people of Kenya, international concerns, and represents the national will."

- ***A shift in the wider policies of a country or a new administration with different priorities.*** It is often a new party in power, leading policy-makers or government officials who are willing to review and reform current policies.
- ***A review or anecdotal evidence revealing that formal and ad hoc policies are mismatched with realities on the ground.*** Reviews of the forest or related sectors, of national outlook studies or of public expectations may prompt the government into action. Likewise, the findings of research, pilot or demonstration projects might encourage broader implementation.
- ***Natural crises such as floods, economic turmoil or conflicts over forest use, which call attention to specific problems.*** Stakeholder groups, including interest groups, informal networks, lobbyists, the media and research organizations, can create momentum for change as well – for example, to introduce bans against logging and log exports, to stop exotic plantations and to provide greater access for local people to collect non-wood forest products.
- ***The threat of losing authority over certain matters.*** Current issues that may trigger reassessment of national forest policy include climate change

(reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation), biodiversity, social aspects of sustainable forest management (forest certification) and good governance (e.g. forest law enforcement).

- ***International commitments and the funding opportunities associated with them.*** These include the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, the UNFF Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests, the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Biosafety Protocol, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, among others.

The successful initiation of a process to review, develop and formulate policy depends on the ability of proponents to identify the right moment to start an initiative and to build sufficient government and stakeholder support. Experience shows that this endeavour requires leadership – expertise, authority and respect, capacity and persistence. It also shows that political will is often stronger if the demand for action is clear and the priority issues are relevant and of high interest. One approach to clarify what is involved and whether it is useful to pursue reform is to apply the concept of "reform space" (Andrews, 2008), which helps to test the degree of acceptance, authority and ability to undertake reform (Figure 3).

A good understanding of the common ground and different views of stakeholders and of how far they are willing to go is essential to assess the possibilities, limits and risks in starting a policy development exercise. Aspects to

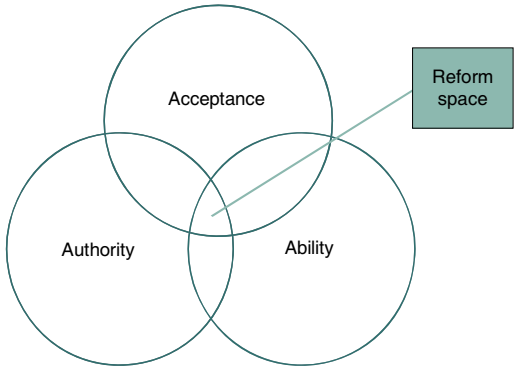
FIGURE 3
Determining reform space

Is there acceptance:

- of the need for change and reform?
- of the key topics to address?
- of the financial and social cost implications?
- by the organizations involved?

Is there authority:

- does legislation allow to initiate reform?
- do formal organizational structures and rules allow initiators to start change?



- do informal organizational norms allow reformers to do what needs to be done?

Is there ability:

- are there enough people, with appropriate skills, to conceptualize and implement reform?
- is there appropriate information to conceptualize, plan, implement, and institutionalize reform?

Source: Adapted from Andrews, 2008

BOX 6

Be prepared to invest considerable time to understand the political context

When policy development processes fail, it is often because the complex social and political dimensions of forest conservation and use are not well understood, or because expectations are unrealistic. It is important to understand who wants or does not want a policy change, and why. Some decision-makers may want to make genuine reforms but others may want to make only cosmetic changes, for example to reorganize a department without revising its rationale or culture.

be examined include the timing with regard to political election cycles, the scope of issues, questions to be addressed, objectives, the sort of process desirable, feasible or necessary, the type of policy expected (new, updated, partially amended) and how it will be adopted. Such a realistic assessment will also be necessary to engage the minister to lead efforts and to take political risks (Box 6).

Formal forest policy development processes, when well timed, provide the opportunity to bring conflicting interests to one table. The willingness of groups to negotiate constructively depends on how each sees the risks and costs of staying away versus the benefits of jointly finding solutions. It is thus important, early in the process, to understand the issues and interests of key stakeholders, the costs and benefits for them, their power and their readiness and capacity to negotiate. Sometimes it is wise to reconsider or postpone policy development if the mood, political will or capacity is questionable. When capacity is the main issue, countries might wish to seek the assistance of FAO or other bodies.

4. Getting started: first steps in policy development

PLANNING, CAPACITY BUILDING AND COMMUNICATION

Once a decision is made to embark on policy development, successful outcomes depend on proper preparation: outlining the responsibilities of decision-making bodies; establishing the rules of engagement; drafting work plans, timetables and budgets; preparing communication strategies; and building capacity to manage the process and engage stakeholder groups in a meaningful way. Basic reference data and information should also be compiled and relevant analysis initiated.

There is no escaping the fact that participatory processes take longer and cost more than traditional in-house policy development carried out by government agencies alone. However, the benefits over the long term are significant. A detailed work plan must be prepared and time, staff and budget set aside for joint efforts such as task forces, briefings and workshops. These requirements were frequently overlooked in the past; often consultations were superficial and involved only those who could afford the time and had the funds. As might be expected under this scenario, few new ideas emerged and the public showed little enthusiasm for or commitment to the changes. If policy-makers want people to implement the policy, they must involve people in its development.

A participatory policy development process is costly, but not having one will cost even more.

Three factors have a major influence on work plans and timelines: the number of stakeholders; the importance and diversity of forest management and administrative arrangements; and the information available on regional and local policy as well as on legal, economic, environmental, technological, ecological and social issues and trends. This last aspect mainly relates to the resources and time needed to conduct reviews and analyses at the beginning of or during policy development.

Some processes to develop or reformulate policy have taken around or somewhat more than a year (e.g. Angola, El Salvador, Latvia, Liberia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor Leste), but sometimes it has taken two to three years to complete studies and conclude negotiations (e.g. Australia, Austria, Finland, Jordan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam). While short processes might fail to involve stakeholders to a sufficient degree for the policy to be broadly understood and accepted, those that take longer than 12 to 18 months run the danger of losing momentum.

No matter what process is followed, policy formulation generally consists of certain steps that need to be considered in planning work, time and budget.

FIGURE 4
Example of a work schedule for a forest policy development process

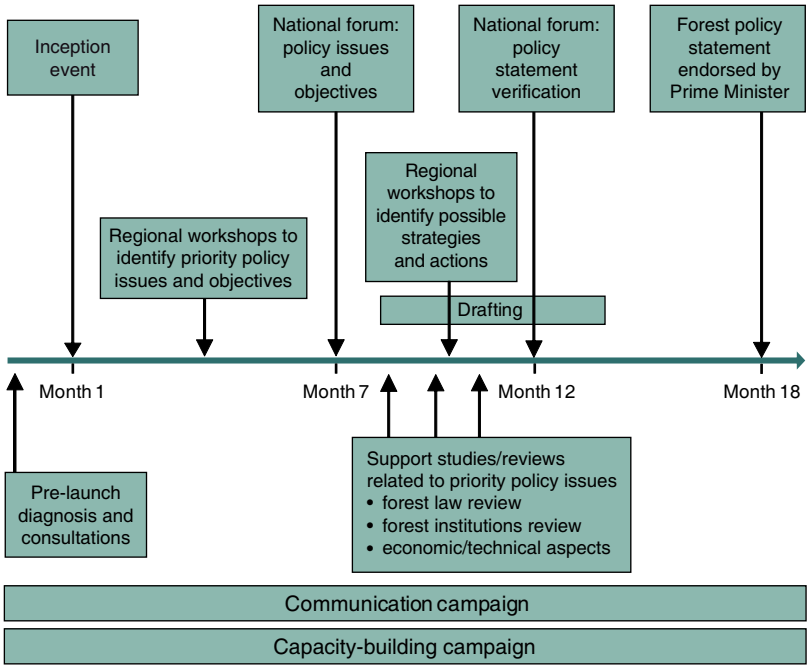

Inception event
National forum: policy issues and objectives
National forum: policy statement verification
Forest policy statement endorsed by Prime Minister
Regional workshops to identify possible strategies and actions
Regional workshops to identify priority policy issues and objectives
Drafting
Month 1
Month 7
Month 12
Month 18
Support studies/reviews related to priority policy issues
• forest law review
• forest institutions review
• economic/technical aspects
Pre-launch diagnosis and consultations
Communication campaign
Capacity-building campaign

Figure 4 outlines the work plan of a hypothetical 18-month process to develop forest policy, similar to that used in Syria. After inception of the process, regional workshops are held to engage stakeholders in diagnosing constraints and opportunities as well as to learn about local issues and views. The results of discussions are then raised in a national forum. In parallel to the undertaking of a number of expert studies, a second round of regional workshops are convened to devise possible strategies and actions. Draft policy statements are then written and discussed, again in a national forum, to reach agreement and seek endorsement by the Head of State. All the while, efforts are made to communicate the process to those involved, raise their awareness and build their capacity.

The importance of clear and transparent communication during the policy development process cannot be overstated. It is an essential ingredient of any multi-stakeholder dialogue because effective communication:

- creates an open and inclusive national dialogue on policy options;
- manages expectations;
- promotes transparency and accountability;
- establishes and maintains momentum;
- promotes a culture of public dialogue, not only between citizens and government, but also between citizen and citizen, business and business, and citizen and business.

There are many ways to communicate with and involve stakeholders and the wider public, including Internet (dedicated Web sites), mobile telephone, radio, commercial or State television, village assemblies, town hall meetings and theatre. Experience shows that communication systems at the community level are the most effective for reaching local people.

Building capacity to facilitate and strengthen the involvement of different stakeholders is an integral part of many forest policy development processes; for example, in Latvia, Serbia, Turkey and Uzbekistan, all working group members were trained to use a participatory approach to policy development from the onset. Topics can include the concept and rules of participatory policy development processes, sharing experiences with participation in similar processes elsewhere, the role of data and information on situation and trends, identifying common interests, developing strategies, establishing mechanisms for constructive communication and feedback, identifying and building advocacy coalitions, lobbying to reach acceptable solutions and enhancing negotiation skills. Planning for capacity-building calls for an assessment of who requires training to be able to participate effectively and of the best means to deliver it, e.g. through workshops at the beginning of the process or through specific coaching.

Capacity building not only improves understanding of the concept, it also contributes to team building and strengthens personal commitment to the process – essential conditions for success.

PREPARATORY ANALYSIS: PROVIDING KEY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sound and credible information and data on a range of topics are needed in order to engage stakeholders meaningfully in discussions such as workshops or bilateral consultations. At the outset, it is beneficial to compile and review existing information, conduct studies and collect data on forests, their management and use, as well as on the context within which they are governed. The depth of the analysis depends on the circumstances, the resources and the time available for a review. It is necessary to prepare relevant, statistically sound and unbiased information that can be made available in discussions, on subjects such as:

Perception drives politics. Policy discussions need to be based on the best available data on key aspects.

- forest resources, their uses and management (e.g. from national forest inventories or assessments);
- situation and trends in the forest sector, political, societal and demographic trends, and economic and technological developments (e.g. from sectoral and outlook studies and public opinion surveys);
- past and current policies, legislation and strategies relevant to forests, including those pertaining to national development, economic and sustainable development, agriculture and energy;
- land use, land use planning, landownership, land tenure and related policies and legislation;
- institutional arrangements and capacities;

- key national forest policy issues such as deforestation, forest tenure and access, illegal logging, carbon sequestration and fire;
- international commitments related to forests.

Often, the necessary information and studies are already available. In many other cases, reviews must be undertaken in key areas such as policies or legal and institutional frameworks, as has been done, for example, in Algeria, Benin, the Comoros and Jordan. Alternatively, technical experts can be invited either to participate in the process or to make presentations at workshops or other forums.

It is particularly important to recognize the importance of wider political, socio-demographic, economic, technological and environmental trends and predicted future scenarios, as these determine and influence how forests will be used and the context within which forests will have to be managed. Many countries have conducted studies or consultations on the outlook for the forest sector (Box 7), some with support from FAO. National experts who are familiar with forecasting or foresight approaches or who are knowledgeable about trends in the wider socio-economic context can provide useful input to the policy development process.

A new policy needs to give guidance on anticipated, not past, conditions. Future conditions need to be in focus when a new policy is being developed.

As adequate financing is crucial for the implementation of policy, those involved in the process need to be aware of the possibilities, limits, options and procedures for obtaining access to new sources of funding. Government authorities leading a policy development process should be aware that they will be required to negotiate and secure additional resources along the way. This task can be facilitated by analysing issues likely to arise, expected changes in financing requirements and the most realistic options to explore.

Be prepared to discuss money. Financing will inevitably be a topic in the policy development process.

Many forest policy development processes include a review of policy, legislation and institutions as part of the preliminary analysis. In other instances, such reviews are part of policy implementation and, at times, trigger a revision. They can also be undertaken in parallel or as a follow up to the diagnosis and issue identification phase. Often, external consultants prepare background studies which the participating stakeholders then discuss.

BOX 7

Future Forum on Forests in Finland

Finland established a multisectoral forum to examine issues and changes that could affect forest-based livelihoods and the environment of the sector over the following 10 to 20 years. This approach was fundamental for finding innovative ideas, and Finland used the results to make national forest policy more proactive and future oriented.

A policy review usually covers current forest policies, strategies, programmes, work plans and action plans, as well as their implementation. It identifies what worked well and what did not: whether goals were adequately set; if incentives and restrictions were counterproductive or conflicted with other instruments or goals; and if the conditions under which policies would be implemented were sufficiently considered. A review helps to draw lessons for improving forest policies and arrangements for their future implementation.

Many forest policy development processes include a review of policy, legislation and institutions to learn what has worked and what has not.

However, many reviews have failed to take into account adequately the linkages with other government policies that touch on forests. Including the most relevant linkages in the review helps to reveal where policy coordination and integration of forest aspects into other policies have been effective, where they have not, and why. It also helps to prioritize areas in need of improvement in this regard under new policy goals.

A legal review may identify questions to address in the policy development process and can then guide subsequent legislative reform. Eventually, the implications of any changes in policy for existing legislation will have to be evaluated to ensure that legislation is in line with policy objectives and contributes to achieving them. A legal review usually examines how laws relate either directly or indirectly to forests and identifies constraints and opportunities for any new forest policy. It also should help identify and address areas where existing legislative provisions are conflicting, contradictory or insufficient. FAO experience underlines the importance of a broad legal review. The review should cover not only forest-specific laws and regulations, but also related legal instruments including those on land tenure, land use planning, land management, environmental protection, protected areas and wildlife management, and wider institutional arrangements such as those dictating the allocation of powers and how decentralization is implemented.

An institutional review can comprise both the institutional arrangements and stakeholders' opinions on these. It is used to identify the factors that contribute to the success or failure of such arrangements or of future alternatives, to assess the sustainability of results and impacts and to draw conclusions that may inform the policy development process. Such a review helps to clarify the extent to which institutional arrangements and organizations are aligned with policy objectives and have the capacity to fulfil their roles. It can also identify impediments, including a limited ability to adapt to changing contexts. The review may have policy-related implications at different levels, affecting processes, relationships (e.g. between ministries) or operations (e.g. reporting hierarchies). It can result in a more appropriate institutional arrangement, a better alignment of an organization's objectives with the forest policy and improved capacity of the organization to deliver its mandate. Today, many new institutional arrangements are emerging for joint implementation of policies; hierarchical relationships are being replaced by a network of parapublic and public-private partnerships.

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

Leadership and support at the highest levels of government are essential from the beginning of the process to signal its importance and expected results. This commitment also assures stakeholders of the need for their involvement and avoids the risk of their seeing it as merely a symbolic or administrative exercise, especially if the minister responsible for forests leads the process and promises to use the results to guide future decisions. By the same token, securing explicit support from the Head of State, the Council of Ministers, the Parliament or a similar high level of government at the start can help encourage other sectors, government ministries and agencies to become involved, particularly if the relevance of the process to their areas of responsibility or the risk of not participating can be demonstrated. If the process is an exclusive initiative of the forestry administration or the ministry responsible for forests, other departments, ministries and agencies may not be convinced of the need to become involved.

It is essential to get a high political authority to endorse the process and pledge to implement the forest policy from the start.

Before embarking on the process of formulating or revising the forest policy, it is important to engage government agencies at the national and regional levels by informing key staff of why the initiative is necessary, how it will be carried out and why their active involvement is necessary and beneficial. In many cases, specific sessions or workshops provide an opportunity to discuss the background, objectives, procedures and intended outcomes so that staff can form realistic expectations. Such venues also can clarify questions, issues and implications regarding their potential involvement; address concerns about the value of the process and the approach for including non-foresters; allay fears associated with the perception that wider involvement entails a loss of control; and assess the possible negative consequences for the institution they work for or their jobs. When this engagement is organized successfully, staff are able to consider themselves part of the process. This is an important requirement for a smooth transition from policy on paper to policy on the ground.

Middle management needs to be involved early and to be convinced of the gains to be made by opening up the process.

DETERMINING WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED AND HOW, AND THE TYPE OF SUPPORT NEEDED

Stakeholders are individuals, communities, groups, government bodies, NGOs and others who are affected by the policy developed or who influence (facilitate or impede) its design and implementation. Their selection and the definition of their role in policy development are critical to the quality, acceptance and usefulness of the policy and need particular attention. Three questions guide participation: who should be involved, how should they be involved and what is necessary for their involvement? In practice, it is neither feasible nor desirable to involve all possible stakeholders. Many will not even be interested.

A good starting point for making decisions on participation is to identify

The success of participatory policy development rests on how well stakeholders are identified and involved.

potential partners and their roles through an analysis that can vary from quick and superficial to an in-depth review of values, rights, responsibilities, internal and external relations, potential returns, representation, power relationships, capacity and needs. Many simple tools are available for this purpose (FAO, 2009; Vermeulen, 2005; DFID and World Bank, 2005).

Many people or groups are directly affected by forest policy, such as those who own the land or have legal or customary rights to use it. Many others are also affected by policy change, including those who extract forest products or who benefit from essential but less tangible services, for example, recreation, protection against soil erosion or climate change mitigation. Yet others are interested in using the land for agriculture, energy production, tourism or commercial development.

Stakeholders who can influence a policy are those who decide on, control or regulate forests and access to their benefits or have authority to change land use: the forest administration and agencies working at different levels, but also government bodies that are charged with biodiversity, environmental protection, agriculture, energy, transport, infrastructure development, overall planning and budget allocation. The level at which the policy will be adopted or endorsed also influences the choice of participants. For instance, if authorization is required from Parliament or Cabinet or if legislation subsequently needs to be amended, it is advisable to secure the involvement of key representatives from these bodies throughout the process. Consideration should also be given to inviting partners, including donors, who are interested in supporting implementation of the new policy.

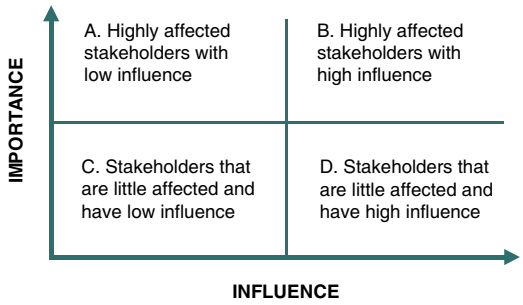
Key stakeholders are those who are affected by or can influence forest policy and its implementation in a significant way.

Legal, administrative and technical experts can also help to inform and guide the process, for example, those working on the national development policy or strategy, forest-related legislation, rules and procedures (including budget allocation), field level administration, education or research and international commitments. Additional experts need to be brought in as well, including those who have knowledge of wider trends and developments influencing the context in which the forest policy will have to be implemented.

One way of identifying key stakeholders is to classify the different groups along a two-dimensional matrix (Figure 5). For instance, forest-dependent poor people in rural areas are important stakeholders as they are highly affected by what happens to forests but often have little influence. A minister of agriculture is also a major player because of the influence he or she wields. Similarly, agro-enterprises that expand their businesses by deforesting cannot be ignored.

The results of the mapping exercise should provide sufficient guidance for identifying the key stakeholders, given practical and budgetary restrictions. While there will be different views on who should participate, serious effort must be made to involve those who are most affected, particularly poor groups living in

FIGURE 5
Stakeholder analysis matrix: who should be involved?


A. Highly affected stakeholders with low influence
B. Highly affected stakeholders with high influence
C. Stakeholders that are little affected and have low influence
D. Stakeholders that are little affected and have high influence
IMPORTANCE
INFLUENCE

remote areas of the country, who often are not well organized and lack capacity. Similarly, particular efforts are often necessary to involve groups that do not consider themselves to be significantly affected, including key bodies from other sectors, so they will subsequently help implement the new policy instead of ignoring or obstructing it.

A range of stakeholders need to engage in the process for a number of purposes, at various times and at different levels (national, regional and local. The depth of their involvement can range from simply receiving information to fully participating in decision-making and implementation (Table 2). Many governments seem reluctant to move beyond providing information. However, meaningful consultation is essential if the policy is to have the support it needs to be implemented, even if the process appears protracted, expensive and confusing at the start. Consultation often works when authorities offer options for discussion and listen to feedback from other stakeholders, including recommendations. This is an appropriate approach if choices can be offered and if possibilities for developing stakeholders' own ideas or putting plans into action (e.g. improving

TABLE 2
Levels of stakeholder participation

Level of participation	Examples	Types of stakeholder
Information	Information to the public, hearings, briefings	Those who consider the policy process of low importance and/or have low influence
Consultation	Meetings, focus groups, interviews	Those who consider the policy process of low importance but have high influence
Deliberation	Workshops, task forces, negotiation	Those who consider the policy process of high importance and/or have high influence
Decision-making	Joint decision-making	Those who consider the policy process of high importance and/or have high influence
Implementation	Responsibilities in work plans	Those with interest and capacity

current services) are limited. Deliberation is a form of participation that generates options, choices and agreement on ways forward, even if the responsibility for implementation lies elsewhere. Joint decisions and recommendations are often made on more general aspects; not everyone can be involved in decisions of an operational nature such as those related to property, investments, the specifics of the policy or institutional changes.

Stakeholders need to see that genuine and adequate efforts are made to engage them seriously; this can be done in various ways.

The appropriate level of participation partly depends on the degree to which stakeholders are affected by the policy or can influence its development and implementation. Table 2 offers suggestions in this regard, but in the end, the stakeholders themselves will decide on the nature and form of their engagement. Many are likely to be sceptical about the benefits (as opposed to the costs) and may be reluctant to get involved.

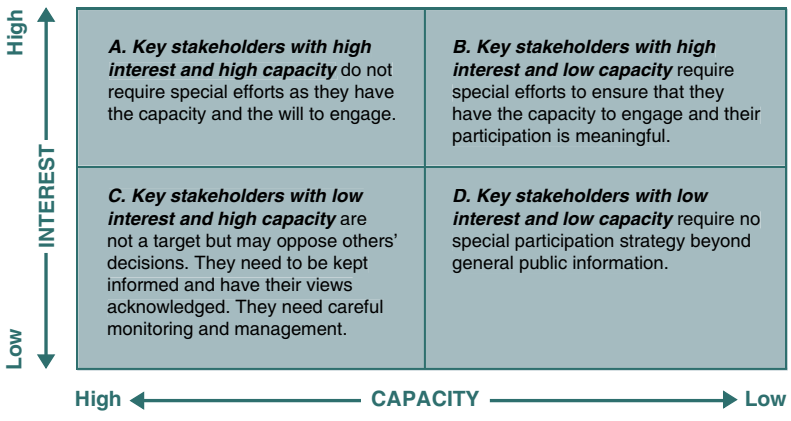
The identification of legitimate stakeholders to include in the process is often contentious, especially because balanced representation of stakeholder groups according to the relative importance of respective needs and interests is essential. Given the political sensitivity surrounding the selection of participants, experience has shown that it is advisable to consult with the different stakeholders on which groups to involve. Doing so not only ensures that they have a say in the process from the beginning; it also enhances the understanding of who the stakeholders are, of their opinions and of relations among them. In practice, different bodies can decide on whom to involve. For example, the initiators of the process can conduct a preliminary analysis and make suggestions to a steering body which then jointly reviews them with participants, perhaps at a launching event.

The decisions regarding which stakeholders to involve and the nature of their participation also need to take into account their interest in policy change, including the importance they place on the process, and their capacity and power to influence policy development and implementation. Often, those interested and willing to be involved are groups that lack capacity and power, even though they might be the most affected by the policy. In addition to those groups who are influential but who deem they have no relevant stake in the process and choose not to get involved, others, including powerful insiders, may fear that a policy change will cause their situation to deteriorate. In order to overcome their reluctance to face change, good arguments would need to be found to show these groups how they would gain (or not lose) by participating. The matrix in Figure 6 can be used to assess and map the willingness and ability of stakeholders to participate in the policy development process.

Securing appropriate participation involves:

- selecting the right participants from each stakeholder group, by considering a range of organizations and individuals in terms of their willingness and ability (legitimate or perceived) to speak for particular groups;
- convincing reluctant or discouraged stakeholders to join the process (if deemed by other stakeholders to be important players);

FIGURE 6
Assessing interest and capacity


High
INTEREST
Low
A. Key stakeholders with high interest and high capacity do not require special efforts as they have the capacity and the will to engage.
B. Key stakeholders with high interest and low capacity require special efforts to ensure that they have the capacity to engage and their participation is meaningful.
C. Key stakeholders with low interest and high capacity are not a target but may oppose others' decisions. They need to be kept informed and have their views acknowledged. They need careful monitoring and management.
D. Key stakeholders with low interest and low capacity require no special participation strategy beyond general public information.
High
CAPACITY
Low

- building the capacity of groups that are too dispersed or too distant from policy processes to participate effectively.

With regard to the first point, much depends on the degree to which groups with similar stakes are coordinated and willing to be involved. When feasible, organizations often consult among themselves to nominate a representative and decide on how to organize discussions during the policy formulation process. In many cases, however, organizations are too diverse, independent or divided on issues to take this approach. Mayers and Bass (1999) propose two criteria to assess whether participants can adequately represent a group:

Many stakeholders will be sceptical and uninterested in becoming involved. Others will require capacity building to participate meaningfully.

- whether and to what degree an individual shares the views of the group or constituency on the issues at stake and can refrain from raising other interests or representing other identities (e.g. those of tribe, class or political party) in the process;
- the degree of accountability to the group for which the individual speaks.

If particular members of a group are chosen well and their capacities to share information and consult among themselves are developed, representatives can genuinely speak on the group's behalf. If representatives are happy with the process and outcomes, chances are good that they will champion the policy.

The development of a credible and legitimate policy depends on finding ways to involve stakeholders who may be the most affected by policy reform but who are not well organized or do not have the capacity to participate meaningfully. Two groups are particularly vulnerable: people who depend on forests for their existence but are not well connected to policy-making or markets; and large parts of society that benefit from the

In most processes, special efforts are needed to let the voice of some stakeholders to be heard, including minority groups, poor people, women, youth and the general public.

environmental and recreational services of forests but have interests that are not advocated by specific lobby groups.

The views of the various segments of society can often be captured through surveys, opinion polls and focus group discussions. Even if not representative as a whole, a few characteristic "voices from the street", e.g. views of individuals from groups with different interests such as women, youth, the urban population or farmers, can provide valuable insights and be obtained with limited budgets. Public opinion is particularly useful in aligning the interests of citizens with forest management priorities to make forests more relevant to society. Latvia is one of the countries that has used this approach, and the results significantly enlightened the policy development process. In Grenada, community meetings and public surveys demonstrated that the public and forest officials shared similar ideas about forest values (Box 8).

Often, it is a challenge to secure the endorsement and active participation of key stakeholders who are not able to dedicate the time or resources to spend days, weeks or months in discussions and negotiations. In most successful NFP processes, assistance with travel costs enables local representatives or poor people to engage in the process. Another barrier to the participation of minority groups, indigenous peoples, poor people, women and the elderly is the real or perceived formality of the process. These groups may have much to offer, including local wisdom and indigenous knowledge, but even their more experienced representatives can find the policy milieu intimidating. Successful processes tend to take special measures to encourage and facilitate the participation of

BOX 8

Participatory forest policy development in Grenada

Historically, forest policy in Grenada focused on production and timber processing and was the responsibility of government, professional foresters and foreign experts. When developing a new policy, the Forest Department recognized the need to include the views of stakeholders to make it effective. These were obtained through a series of forums, (including community meetings), cross-sectoral committees, study groups, and public surveys and hearings. A common vision was developed, a stakeholder analysis was conducted, and regular multi-stakeholder meetings were held. The Forest Department shaped a new strategic direction, and a national workshop helped to build consensus. Guided by a multi-stakeholder committee, the process resulted in the 1999 Forest Policy, which is very much owned by the people of Grenada who decided what it would look like. The Forest Department was transformed from an organization that had a mandate for the direct management of forests to one that facilitates implementation of the vision of the people of Granada.

Source: Bass, 2000.

such stakeholders, for example, separate meetings for ethnic minorities, women, landless people and other marginalized groups to put them at ease to speak out – which would not be possible in a large meeting where powerful groups or more eloquent speakers usually dominate. For example, in Turkey, special attention was given to involving women in local assessments, and separate meetings were held for them. Efforts used elsewhere to inform and reach out to interested parties include call-in radio and television shows and public consultations via the Internet. Many approaches and tools designed for a wide range of situations are available for effective involvement of stakeholders throughout the different phases of the process (e.g. FAO, 2009).

Investments of time and resources in participatory policy development processes yield stronger support and improve the visibility of the forest sector. Participatory processes sometimes also achieve major breakthroughs, especially when forest administrations have traditionally fulfilled a policing role and have a history of poor relations with stakeholders. Such processes build confidence and improve understanding of the needs of participants, including government organizations. In selecting stakeholders it is important to take the time to understand the needs, interests and capacities of the different groups and to find the right representatives, avoiding the temptation to choose for convenience those who are already known, those who rush to step forward or those who are easiest to mobilize.

It may be difficult to engage other government bodies and agencies such as those responsible for national development, energy, agriculture, infrastructure and finance because they may consider forest issues of minor relevance and because other policies and legislative provisions shape their daily operations. To involve other sections of government, high-level political support within the respective ministries is crucial. Countries that have included key ministries in steering committees, for example, have met with some success in this regard. Where active participation is not possible, stakeholders should be informed of progress at key stages of the process.

GUIDING AND MANAGING THE PROCESS: STEERING BODY AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

A steering committee is frequently used to lead the forest policy development process and to provide the necessary political support. As noted previously, it is easier for other government organizations to recognize the importance of forest policies if they join the process at the start. If their participation is at a high level and their representatives are empowered to influence the design and the process, the advantages of establishing such committees can be significant, including:

- easier access to information and better understanding of the practice of implementing previous forest policy;
- recommendations that take into account all the important points of view;
- better and quicker dissemination of conclusions and recommendations;
- greater acceptance of revised forest policy and arrangements for implementing it.

A steering committee is strong, and thus useful, if the most important stakeholders are at the table with representation from sufficiently high levels; if members are supported by the bodies they represent; and if their participation is not merely symbolic. Representatives should be drawn from ministries and private entities that deal with issues relevant to forests, including, for example, agriculture, environment, economic development, industry or mining, planning, infrastructure development, finance, education and research. Where an established national multi-stakeholder steering committee exists in the context of an NFP process (e.g. Cambodia, Liberia, Paraguay, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania), it is often well suited to assume a lead role in policy development because it has a good institutional base (Box 9). In some countries (e.g. El Salvador and Jordan), such committees were established specifically for the forest policy development process.

A steering committee guiding the forest policy development process is strong and useful if it consists of key stakeholders who have the will and position to provide political support.

A steering committee should drive the process and guide the team managing the exercise, ensuring that operations run smoothly and important decisions are made. It will normally also be involved in submission of the draft policy for approval, possible related follow-up amendments, preparation for implementation and communication aspects throughout all phases.

The day-to-day management of the forest policy development process is often undertaken by a team or an individual appointed for this purpose by the body in charge. The coordinator can be an independent entity or person that, ideally:

- has expertise in moderating and facilitating discussion or negotiation processes;
- is accepted and trusted by and can interact with all stakeholders;
- has credibility with the government;
- listens respectfully to all points of view and encourages participants to do likewise;
- has no bias on the issues and can elicit a balanced picture from very different types of stakeholders;

BOX 9

Uganda's NFP steering committee

The forest sector reform process that led to the development of Uganda's revised Forestry Policy (2001) was steered by a 12-member Forest Sector Co-ordination Committee, with members from across central and local government, the private sector and civil society. A Forest Sector Co-ordination Secretariat in the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment supported the process which involved seven working groups composed of 73 members from diverse interests and backgrounds.

Source: Bass, 2000.

- is able to resist pressure from strong administrative and political bodies, if exerted.

Professional facilitation and communication skills are essential to achieving meaningful participation, which is in turn a prerequisite for formulating effective and lasting forest policy. One of the most frequent observations in the many processes in which FAO has been involved is the importance of the choice of a leader – who needs to have the right skills, personal qualities and organizational affiliations.

The steering committee and/or coordinator usually invites three to eight national experts to oversee operational aspects of the policy development process – individuals who possess skills in relevant technical areas such as agriculture, environmental protection, forest industry, forest research, forest management and administration proper. Experience has shown that a team drawn from forest authorities alone finds it difficult to get the acceptance and trust needed to work effectively, as it fails to represent effectively the various interests of all stakeholders. By the same token, external advisers can provide technical advice and support, but if they are the main authors of the policy, government and other stakeholders will feel little ownership; hence, political commitment to implementation will be weak, as will accountability and responsibility for outcomes.

A multidisciplinary team, led by a well-respected independent person or body, often manages the process.

The team needs to be capable of overcoming the two main challenges of policy development:

- ensuring all views are heard and treated with respect, while reaching meaningful conclusions that stakeholders accept;
- translating the conclusions reached during consultations into a policy document that is fair, balanced and representative of stakeholders' views, while proposing measures that are feasible and easily understood.

Although it is useful for the coordinator to give team members on-the-job training, it is also helpful to convene a special meeting in the initial phase to brief them in detail about the process, discuss expected roles and prepare them for the tasks ahead.

5. Developing an agreement through dialogue and negotiation

At the start of many forest policy development processes, the lead body organizes a formal launch to mark the political importance of the process and of expected results. The event is used to discuss the aims of the process and how it will unfold. It is also an opportunity to arrive at a mutual understanding and acceptance of the stakeholders to be involved and to identify possible capacity-building needs. The launch often inaugurates an information campaign to encourage involvement in the process and highlight the importance of forests and the forest sector to society. For example, in Suriname, announcements and invitations to participate in public meetings at the regional and national levels were communicated widely through national newspapers and other channels.

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS AND CONSULTATION AT THE LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS

The start of a policy development process usually entails a stakeholder analysis of issues at the local, regional and national levels. Workshops are particularly useful to identify the obstacles that local communities face and to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to suggest ways to overcome them. Such bottom-up participatory processes often lead to a change in attitude, as happened in Angola, where other policy development processes considered using the same approach. In many cases, workshops are preceded or accompanied by training in participatory policy development, as described in the section on planning, capacity building and communication.

A bottom-up participatory process using multi-stakeholder workshops is a powerful way to develop policy that works in practice.

Issue analysis can be conducted through in-person, telephone or written interviews or surveys. Face-to-face communication, if possible in small groups, allows meaningful discussion and interaction and is thus considerably more effective for identifying and prioritizing concerns. National and regional workshops have proved particularly useful in this regard. A number of countries have set up thematic multi-stakeholder task forces or working groups, often with participants from different sectors, to discuss particular topics in a series of meetings. As noted above, call-in radio, television and consultation via the Internet are other ways to reach those who cannot participate in deliberations in person. Frequently, participatory assessments or discussions in stratified focus groups are organized in villages, in the local language, before workshops. They

also sometimes take place afterwards to consult on outcomes. For instance, in Timor-Leste, trained field staff convened meetings with groups living in remote areas to collect feedback on a simplified initial draft of the national forest policy which was translated into Tetun (local pidgin).

When experts ask for input into the policy process and expect it to be freely given, they must also be prepared to report the results of deliberations back to contributors, along with explanations if suggestions were not taken on board. Failing to do so can leave stakeholders feeling alienated and disempowered, unaware of what happened to the insights and information they willingly shared.

The objective of all stakeholder workshops, regardless of the level at which they take place, is to identify and consult on issues, objectives, constraints and opportunities for conserving and managing forests. A discussion of issues in the context of the current forest policy can focus on the extent to which its scope, aim, objectives and implementation modalities are still appropriate by using, for example, participatory local assessments (as has been done in Turkey) and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis (applied in El Salvador and Latvia). It is important, however, to discuss not only past and present issues, but also possible future scenarios. Identifying, mapping and understanding the range of stakeholder views on forest issues, including those concerning forest use and management, is crucial to policy development because such deliberations help to focus attention on what matters. In the process, the coordinator needs to ensure that issues are discussed from the perspective of the various stakeholders. Otherwise, the views of more vocal participants, such as university lecturers or researchers, could dominate those of farmers or others who might be more reluctant to engage.

Explicit efforts are needed to bring future perspectives and broader national development goals into the policy discussion.

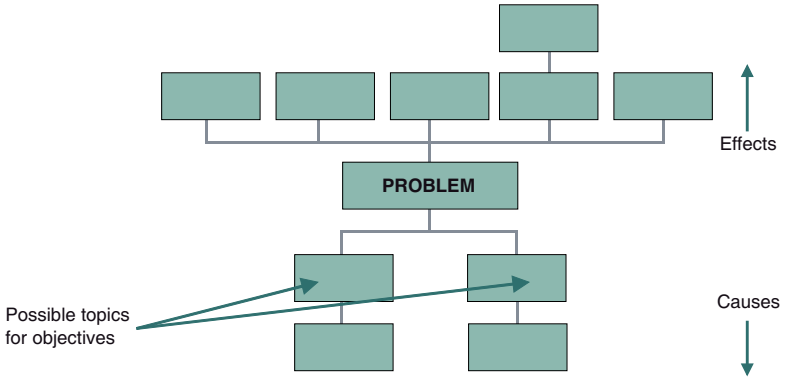
Stakeholder workshops should not only identify the main problems, but also propose solutions and policy objectives to deal with them. Problem tree analysis (Figure 7) is a tool to derive policy objectives from each of the most important issues raised. When participants identify the sources or causes of each problem, the correction they advance is often the appropriate policy objective. Many toolkits, particularly from development agencies and for project development, refer to this approach (e.g. ITTO, 2009). When the discussion starts with problems, the related objectives are usually more attainable and the solutions more grounded in reality. Another approach – one that is more suited to countries that want to develop a long-term vision and more ambitious policy goals – is to ask stakeholders to identify possible future opportunities and find ways to "bridge back to the present" (Box 10).

A starting point for developing a long-term vision or goal is to ask questions such as:

- how will society evolve and what will it look like in 10 to 15 years?
- what do different groups want forests to provide 10 to 15 years from now?
- what does the national development policy or strategy want to achieve in the long term?

The discussion of different perspectives and scenarios helps to generate a common view on what groups are likely to expect and need from the nation's

FIGURE 7
Problem tree analysis



BOX 10
Questions to identify visions and goals of forest policy

- Who owns, manages or uses our forests – today and in the longer term? Addressing forest tenure and land use planning, this question covers issues such as: Is there a balance between the rights of different users of the forest? Do stakeholders have adequate rights to meet their needs? What are main conflicts and where do these occur? Is it clear who has control over the forest and where?
- How should we use our forests now and in the future? Addressing forest management, this question might embrace the following others: How do forest companies use the forest and is this acceptable? How do local people use the forest and is this acceptable? Does one group use the forest to the detriment of another group? If so, who is affected and how? Do we have the skills and knowledge to use the forest without harming other interests?
- How can we get more from the forest? This question would broadly relate to the social, environmental and economic benefit themes of the policy. Is forestry profitable, and if not, why not? Do forests benefit the poorest people in society? Is the environment adequately protected or are additional measures needed? What opportunities exist to increase the outputs or benefits from forests to the nation?
- How can we work together better? This aspect broadly corresponds to the institutional framework theme of the policy and might include the following questions: Do the different stakeholders talk to each other enough? Is the balance of power between the different stakeholders appropriate? Who feels that their views are not heard? Is coordination between different parts of government adequate? On which issues are we most likely and least likely to reach agreement? Do we have the mechanisms to build consensus when people have different ideas about how to use the forest?

forests. It should also help to link forest issues with those of broader development – land use management, biodiversity conservation, environmental accounting and poverty alleviation – and to focus on future developments where the forest policy needs to provide guidance (Box 11). Several tools are available to map and visualize the implications of various scenarios for use during stakeholder workshops where discussions can generate new alternatives and innovative thinking. Another way to establish a strong link with national development goals is to invite the responsible office to discuss how better to align forest and national development policies.

DEVELOPING AN AGREEMENT ON GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

Participants that have joined the forest policy development process share the belief that they are better off entering into discussions and negotiation with other groups than attempting to work unilaterally. Starting from this joint interest, the process needs to be managed to strike a balance between issues that are undisputed or abstract and issues that are so contentious as to break off discussions or spark serious conflicts or violence. Negotiators often come to the table with narrow assumptions, the conviction that their priorities are the most realistic, and a readiness to fight. Moderators have the key role of creating the openness required

Forest policy development involves stakeholders reconciling their conflicting views and interests and working out mutually acceptable solutions.

BOX 11

India's long-term vision on forest and tree cover

The National Forest Policy of India (1988) envisages one-third of the land area under forest or tree cover, and the target rises to two-thirds in the hills and in mountainous regions. Given that forest and tree cover has hovered around 23.7 percent in each of the biennial assessments since 1997, the goal is considered extraordinary because it means adding another 31.5 million hectares. Most of the proposed increase has to come from outside the area officially recorded as forest, where competing demands to use the land for expansion of farms and infrastructure are already high. Despite such odds, the 1988 goal was reiterated in the National Environment Policy of 2006, and a host of new programmes and policy reforms have been initiated to pursue it. The major steps include involving local government (village Panchayat) in afforestation, making tree planting a priority under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (one of the largest employment programmes globally) and announcing a Green India Mission under the National Action Plan for Climate Change to afforest 6 million hectares of degraded land. The 1988 goal was visionary and has helped planners to undertake highly ambitious initiatives in the forestry sector.

Source: Sanjay Kumar, personal communication.

to find win-win solutions and steering discussions to practical matters of what to do and how. Moderators also must ensure that the interests of affected but powerless groups are recognized. When excluded as unimportant, unrepresentative or ill-informed, such groups have sometimes found a way to subvert the consultative process, challenge its legitimacy or ignore the agreements reached in their absence.

Priority interests and issues that emerge from discussions need to be summarized to be useful. In this regard, tables and graphs have proved to be effective means for establishing a common understanding of participants' views and interests. They reveal the interests and issues of main importance to various stakeholders, where they might clash and where consensus can be built among a few or all stakeholder groups involved. Joint exploration and negotiation of options also require that groups have an opportunity to discuss possible solutions and resolve outstanding disagreements until a sufficient basis for developing a policy emerges.

Given that participants are prepared to compromise in some areas if they gain in others that are more important to them, "negotiable" issues can be discussed to find compromise solutions and related objectives and strategies that accommodate different interests. There may also be highly contentious issues with incompatible interests which give rise to conflicts. These are often best dealt with by identifying them at the outset and excluding them explicitly from discussion, with a general understanding that they can be taken up at a later stage if all involved agree. Addressing different stakeholder interests in a constructive way and developing mutually accommodating solutions takes time. Moreover, consensus only holds in practice when participants perceive that they have gained in the process, despite compromises they probably had to make.

Developing policy agreements is necessarily a messy, iterative and potentially conflictual process.

The extent to which stakeholders become and remain involved in the process evidently depends on how they perceive its relevance. Thus, while some groups might find the process has enough merit to send high-level representatives regularly, others might be present only occasionally, through a substitute or not at all. Different approaches will be needed to bring about meaningful dialogue and to elicit policy guidance at key points in the process – ranging from dedicated workshops or meetings to bilateral consultations with those who are not willing or able to participate through established channels. In this regard, countries have used different means such as task forces (e.g. Cambodia), working groups that include other ministries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda) and workshops focused on specific issues or groups. What is important is that sustained efforts be made to reach consensus among key stakeholders, as it is they who have to ensure coherence with their respective policies.

During the development of a forest policy, stakeholders often conduct reviews to assess the consistency of different options with related policies, legal provisions, international commitments and institutional frameworks. Financing and budgetary implications are also examined. If appropriate instruments and budgets for implementing policies are lacking, efforts to formulate each word carefully are pointless.

In setting visions and determining goals, it is important not only to be

ambitious and strategic, but also to be realistic with regard to what can be achieved in the short and medium terms. Doing so requires building political will and commitment to achieve the vision and goals while at the same time securing support for immediate implementation. Initial steps involve reaching agreement on the approach and strategies and on the distribution of responsibilities. In the past many forest policies were highly prescriptive and focused on government agencies for their implementation. With changing contexts and more bodies involved in policy development and implementation, many forest policies have shifted to focus on the intended results but to allow flexibility in the methods to be used in implementation – allowing adaptation to changing circumstances and uptake of experiences. While the forest administration might be expected to deliver the policy, the role of government has changed. Instead of working alone, authorities now need to promote and facilitate implementation, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to the different parties.

An agreement on forest policy should not only cover visions and goals, but also the approach to implementation and related responsibilities.

The determination of objectives and the means to achieve them is, in practice, not a linear step-by-step procedure but an iterative process of discussion and negotiation. A mix of policy instruments is normally used to reach objectives, and it is often necessary to adjust the objectives to maximize the effectiveness of the instruments (Box 12). While the latter need to be coherent and mutually reinforcing, the choice of which to use will affect different groups to different degrees. For example, tax exemptions for establishing plantations would not be an incentive for people who do not pay taxes. Thus, the calculation of costs and benefits by a stakeholder group will influence its support for a specific policy objective and its implementation.

To reach certain policy objectives, a mix of measures is often devised, including regulations, economic incentives and disincentives, and persuasion.

The conventional reliance on regulations, control and policing is often incompatible with practical realities or the desire to involve stakeholders, such as smallholder tree growers or NGOs, in policy implementation. Wherever the capacity to enforce regulations is limited, this approach alone is ineffective, e.g. in protecting areas of high conservation values. Thus, in many cases, measures that go beyond command-and-control practices and that involve the private sector are devised.

Adequate financing is crucial for translating the intentions and ambitions of forest policy goals into actions. Stakeholders must thus consider budget or financing implications from the onset as they assess the merits of various proposals and options. A search for new or additional financing options is often proposed in order not to discount good suggestions and to avoid conflicts over the redistribution of existing budgets. This requires involvement of related experts from both the public and private sectors who are familiar with the conditions and implications of drawing on different new funding sources. The formulation of forest financing strategies often takes place outside the process of developing a forest policy, even though many decisions associated with one

BOX 12

Matching aims and means

When the Government of Costa Rica decided to encourage private landholders to engage more in stewardship of forest for delivery of environmental services (especially catchment protection), it did so through incentives because it recognized that the objective would not be achieved by using a command-and-control approach.

When India's forest policy was reformed to encourage and facilitate farm forestry (in recognition of the likelihood that timber supply from government forests would not satisfy surging demand and imports would be prohibitively expensive), the incentives and disincentives for farmers who might consider growing trees were extensively reviewed. A mix of educational and advisory efforts, financial incentives and removal of disincentives led to an explosion of farm forestry in many states, not because farmers were compelled to undertake this activity, but because explicit messages encouraged them to do so, and because the opportunity was created to generate higher incomes through the marketplace.

affect the other. For example, a move to decentralize or to devolve power to local communities raises the question of how forest governance and related capacity building will be financed at that level. Likewise, financing strategies overlap with policy decisions and would benefit from or require changes in legislation or in institutional arrangements. For example, the decision to establish a national forest fund, payment schemes for environmental services or new financing mechanisms to reduce deforestation and forest degradation triggers a series of policy, legal and institutional issues. For these reasons, it is useful to develop a financing strategy or an outline of intended arrangements within the forest policy development process itself. The forest policy statement should indicate the financing mechanisms or alternatives for financing foreseen to implement the various objectives.

The formulation of a forest financing strategy should be an integral part of the forest policy development process.

Negotiation of policy objectives and means for achieving them involves discussion of concrete actions, expected results, distribution of responsibilities and costs – elements that form an integral part of implementation strategies, programmes or action plans. When stakeholders are consulted in the design of these documents, they are more likely to accept to participate in implementation. Stakeholder involvement also promotes an appropriate allocation of responsibilities and limits the opportunity for any party to serve its own interests alone. To avoid confusion, the assignment of responsibilities must be clear, and overlaps and conflicts of interests avoided. Distinctions also need to be made between actions requiring attention in the short term (for which resources and expertise are available) and those that are more strategic (Box 13).

DRAFTING A FOREST POLICY STATEMENT

The process coordinator and management team usually compile a synthesis of stakeholder discussions and negotiations, which forms the basis of a first draft of the forest policy. They need to identify the most widely accepted viewpoints and to organize the suggestions and tentative agreements on visions, principles, goals and implementation approaches into the initial structure of the document. The identified key topics and priority issues can also provide a coherent structure. Suggested objectives and implementation approaches are grouped by key topic, with more specific issues addressed in sub-objectives. This format will also reveal differences in opinion about the focus and direction of a new forest policy or parts of it. These divergent views can be outlined as additional policy options for further consideration. Often it is useful to outline the issues, content and structure of the forest policy, along with options, soon after the first round of meetings.

To be useful, a forest policy statement must be short, be free from ambiguity, capture policy accurately and be easy for a wide range of stakeholders to understand and apply. Bulky policy documents, whatever their quality, tend to be shelved and forgotten. The language should avoid technical jargon and be worded in a way that other policy-makers and the general public will find relevant. For example, visions and objectives can be formulated to stress the benefits to society: the number of jobs created rather than of hectares afforested; a clean and safe water supply as opposed to the area of watershed managed; and the number of households receiving fuelwood and food, rather than data expressed in terms of cubic metres.

Keep it short! Good forest policy statements are clear and simple so that they can be understood by and meaningful to as many people as possible.

While it is essential for drafters to reflect the substance of consultations in the

BOX 13

Balance long-term vision with what is possible to achieve

Common mistakes in formulating a national forest policy include relying on defective data and taking on overly ambitious goals – for example, on sustainable yield, plantation areas established or plantation growth rates – without first securing the political will to achieve them. The tendency for the forest agency to develop grand plans and targets in isolation, without regard to its capacity to deliver or the prospects for securing additional funds, is also problematic. Therefore, it is important that expectations about funding (whether from administrative budgets, from foreign sources or from new mechanisms such as markets for ecosystem services) be realistic. It is equally important to share and be clear about implementation responsibilities. Too many policies continue to focus on government action when much can be undertaken by the private sector, including local communities and households.

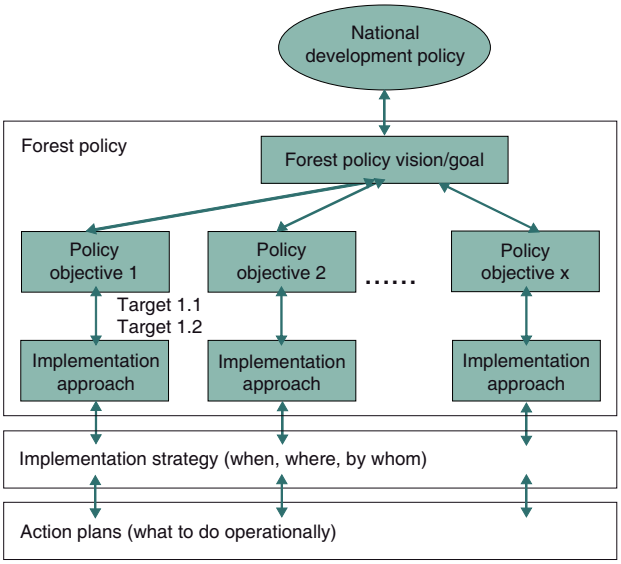
statement, technical inputs and other considerations are also important. Topical issues of the day must be kept in perspective, given that the policy should be valid for more than five or ten years, even though not all issues over this period can be foreseen during the formulation process.

With regard to structure, forest policy statements could comprise the following (Figure 8):

- a background section that describes the context: the value of the country's forests; why they need to be managed sustainably; the threats, constraints and issues that need to be addressed; the rationale for updating the policy; definitions of key terms; and the process of developing and formulating the policy;
- a description of the vision, principles and goals for future development of the sector;
- an elaboration of the thematic areas and related objectives and sub-objectives;
- the approach to implementation in each of the specific thematic areas;
- the distribution of responsibilities between government and other stakeholders.

The next section in a forest policy statement is usually a general description of the future orientation of the sector, based on stakeholder consultations – a short vision or mission statement, or the broad goal or purpose. This is often a single sentence and need not exceed a paragraph (see Annex 2 for examples). The vision or goal should be aligned to contribute to overall national development. It should probably look to a future in which the economic, social, cultural and environmental demands placed on forests are in balance.

FIGURE 8
One possible structure of a forest policy statement



Principles can be included to express general orientations for the policy, such as sustainable development, poverty alleviation, good governance and compliance with international commitments – particularly if no vision statement is elaborated. They can also address the need for coherent forest-related policies across different sections of government and the need to involve stakeholders in implementation.

Objectives are set on a limited number of key topics that directly contribute to the vision or goal. They specify what the country and its society wish to achieve in relation to priority forest topics over a decade or more – where possible, using measurable targets. Some countries have structured their topics and related objectives according to type of forest, location or region, or outputs (e.g. conservation, watershed management, industrial timber, non-wood forest products). Many countries specify concrete objectives for around five to ten topics.

Some countries briefly outline the policy's implementation strategy in the policy statement, including institutional arrangements, measures to be undertaken and distribution of responsibilities. It is also useful to specify main aspects related to legislation, financing, communication, institutional change, capacity building, monitoring and policy review. This information can then form the basis for more elaborated strategies, programmes or action plans. For example, the forest policy statement of the Gambia specifies 12 requirements on less than two pages. Other countries specify more detailed implementation strategies as integral part of their forest policy statement (see Chapter 6).

STAKEHOLDER VALIDATION OF THE DRAFT FOREST POLICY

Depending on how the process was conducted, the draft policy is likely to be validated by a mix of technical experts from within and outside government and other stakeholders, including people who were not fully involved but have influence over its adoption. The validation process might include other sectors, government bodies responsible for the national development strategy, the office of the body foreseen to adopt the policy and politicians or parliamentarians who will be influential in discussing and deciding on subsequent budgets, legislative changes or other key aspects of policy implementation. Stakeholders who are most affected by the policy but have limited capacity or motivation to participate should be consulted as well. Therefore, the draft forest policy statement and implementation strategy are circulated widely for review and discussion. This is also a means to keep stakeholders engaged and to show them that leaders of the process value their involvement.

It is particularly important to validate the draft forest policy with key stakeholders who were not willing or able to follow the process.

Following initial consultations, another round of workshops (at the regional, then national level, if possible) is often conducted to obtain feedback and additional inputs on the draft statement and proposed approach to implementation. If the implementation strategy is developed in a separate exercise after the forest policy, subsequent meetings usually focus on the second document. After further revisions

are made to both the policy and implementation plan, the steering committee conducts a final review and submits the package to the head of the government body leading the process, often the minister responsible for forests, for presentation to the Head of Government, Council of Ministers or other high-level body, as appropriate. If the process is managed well, all members of society should have a clear understanding of how, why and by whom the country's forests are to be managed, even if they do not agree with the policy statement in its entirety.

Bugwood.org/4166075/G.D.Hertel

6. Preparing adoption and implementation of the forest policy

PREPARING FOR FORMAL ADOPTION

Formal adoption of the forest policy, including the approach to implementation and the division of responsibilities, must be at a high enough political level to commit all relevant sections of government to actions that are needed to achieve the goals set by the policy. The authority and influence of the policy, particularly from the viewpoint of other governmental bodies and agencies, differs considerably depending on whether it is the Chief of the Forest Service, the Minister of Forestry, the Council of Ministers or Cabinet (e.g. Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa), Parliament (e.g. Estonia, Scotland [United Kingdom]), the Prime Minister (e.g. Viet Nam) or the President (e.g. Nicaragua) who signs off on the national forest policy. In many cases, the first option is to secure approval from the Council of Ministers (Cabinet).

A new forest policy should be adopted at a high enough political level to be effective in committing those needed to reach the goals set.

Because the body that ultimately adopts the policy will review and comment on it before its adoption, an influential representative of this body should be kept well informed of progress throughout the development process. Submitted new forest policies sometimes fail to be adopted as foreseen, for a number of different reasons, including government changes or procedural aspects. Policy developers thus need to be well informed about procedures, to follow the process closely, and to lobby and respond as needed to secure formal adoption. It is also useful to have a contingency plan to deal with different eventualities that can arise after the submission.

If the process by which the new policy was developed was broad based, well informed and based on consensus, the agreement among participating stakeholders can be made symbolically more important and manifest through formal adoption by representatives of the stakeholders. This can be done at different levels, from provincial to national. At any level, signing events should be given high political and public visibility.

Once the policy is adopted by the government, it is usually published and disseminated widely within the country. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of clear and transparent professional communication in disseminating the outcomes to the wider public. The more people know about, understand

and agree with the forest policy, the better. It is important to allocate sufficient time and resources for a communication campaign directed at different target audiences. Experience has amply shown that wherever communication is overlooked or is done in-house with limited capacity, all efforts to implement a new forest policy remain largely ineffective. Although it may seem costly to outsource communication to professional agencies, failing to do so is likely to be more costly.

The importance of professional communication must not be overlooked. If people do not know about the new policy, it may as well not exist.

PREPARING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Preparations to implement a new forest policy, in many respects, run parallel to the policy development process. Indeed, implementation issues may have been part of the reason why a new policy was required. Throughout the process, stakeholders consider different options, their implications and the practicalities of implementing them. Thus, the development of a new forest policy cannot be dissociated with its implementation at any stage. Preparing for implementation starts with involving field-level administrators in the development process, acknowledging that implementation decisions often make or change policy, and being flexible about the means of implementation while being clear about expected results.

After the policy is formally adopted, a number of steps need to be taken to maintain the momentum and put plans into action:

- align the institutional framework and institutions with the new policy;
- align forest-related legislation and other regulatory provisions;
- develop and/or adjust action plans, including for communication and capacity building, and set up financial arrangements and budgets.

There is broad agreement that the translation of the good intentions expressed in policies into action on the ground remains a major challenge, and that the complexities of implementation are often underestimated. In summarizing experiences in Asia and the Pacific, Enters, Ma and Leslie (2003) and Durst (2003) observed that one of the reasons for weak implementation and a lack of impact is that policies sometimes are seriously flawed, out of touch with reality and outdated. In a number of countries, forest policies are insufficiently backed by legislation, inadequately funded and lacking the support of programmes, operational strategies or action plans. In many cases, the institutions and organizations are not able or willing to adhere to the agreed policies or plans because attitudes have not changed or have changed very little.

Maintaining political will and using the momentum for change through concrete follow-up action is key for implementing policy.

Elaborating an implementation strategy, programme or action plan

More detailed implementation strategies, programmes or action plans are elaborated either as part of the development of a new forest policy or in a separate

process. The latter approach is useful in situations where the policy is likely to lead to radical changes in instruments, organizations and stakeholder involvement. It also allows more time to consult with stakeholders and discuss implementation arrangements without letting them interfere with the policy development process and without losing momentum. However, if the specifics of implementation are worked out at a later time, sufficient energy and resources may not be available. The important point is to ensure that the policy and implementation plan are complementary and that, taken together, they cover the implementation of the forest policy goals comprehensively.

Implementation strategies, programmes or action plans describe how to put the forest policy into practice and how to achieve each objective (when, where, by whom). Based on the agreed approach to implementation for each objective, and considering the necessary flexibility to allow adaptation to changing circumstances, concrete measures are devised. A wide range of policy instruments exist that can be adjusted and combined to fit a given context, goal and issue. They can offer incentives or disincentives and can be based on power (regulation), money (economic instruments) or information. Policy instruments can:

- assign rights (e.g. to communities, the private sector or the State, including contracts and adjudication) and regulate behaviour (command-and-control, enforcement);
- prescribe the practices to use or leave this decision to the target group;
- primarily address prices (taxes, subsidies) or quantities (marketable allowances);
- specify or address inputs (including processes) or outputs (performance);
- distribute abatement and damage costs between specific target groups or in society;
- be inflexible or allow flexibility over time (thus stimulating innovations).

Voluntary agreements between government and private bodies are another means of encouraging and facilitating voluntary action based on self-interest. Implementation strategies or programmes also spell out the range of financing sources to be used – public, private, national and international. Such documents, in turn, provide the basis for developing short- and medium-term action plans.

Planning for monitoring

It is always advisable, even necessary, to monitor implementation and to evaluate whether a policy is achieving the desired outcomes. Therefore, arrangements for monitoring and review should be an integral part of the strategy and any follow-up plan. Monitoring of implementation identifies deviations from objectives and planned actions and thus allows corrections, if warranted. Contrary to some perceptions, monitoring is not about collecting data on results and impacts, determining the relevance of objectives and proposing how to improve performance. Rather, these questions are addressed through evaluations or reviews. While evaluations are often associated with grading the performance of organizations, most evaluations are based on the principle of participation – shared learning, dialogue and discussion. Periodically, perhaps at five-year

Monitoring and periodic review are vital for effective implementation.

intervals, the steering committee of an NFP process or other groups can be tasked to arrange a review of the policy. An in-depth review, for example on the achievement of goals, is usually undertaken near the end of the policy's planning horizon or implementation. Such reviews are often the starting point for revising the forest policy.

In the preparation and implementation of the policy, it is crucial to make accountability clear – who is responsible for what and the consequences of non-performance. It is important to ensure that responsibilities, authority and accountability are aligned – that people are not held responsible for occurrences over which they have no control, but that they also pay the price if they use their responsibility, authority and resources badly. Effective accountability again depends on good monitoring, to explain and justify conduct to different levels of government and to stakeholders.

Adjusting legislation to be in line with the forest policy

Sometimes, national forest legislation is out of step with the policy changes being proposed and with the forest agency whose task is both to implement the new policy and to enforce the outdated legislation (Box 14). This situation arises when policy, legislation and institutions are reviewed and modified separately, at different times and with different frequency. It could happen, for example, that a country's policy is reviewed every ten years while its legislation hasn't changed for 20 years and its forest agency has been reorganized twice in the previous five years. This disconnect can manifest itself, for example, when a government's stated policy is to engage in community forestry but legislation precludes giving community groups access to forest resources.

Countries that have undertaken profound forest policy reforms (e.g. the Comoros and Syrian Arab Republic) have often reviewed forest legislation in a

BOX 14

Adapting forest law to reflect a change in forest policy

Forest policies and laws have traditionally provided little scope for local people to play a meaningful part in the planning, management and allocation of forest resources on which they have depended and which they have sustainably managed for centuries. Typically, the State has taken on this role and has given little or no recognition or protection to community-based systems and no alternative mechanisms by which local groups or individuals might assert effective control. In many countries, efforts to address these shortcomings in forest policy have been paralleled by law reforms to improve the legal environment for local participation in forest management through devolution, decentralization and better recognition of the historical land or territorial claims of local people.

separate but related exercise to bring one in line with the other. When legislation is revised to conform to a new policy and is subsequently adopted, the entire government, in essence, is expressing its endorsement for both. Yet officials in other agencies still may not feel compelled to adhere to the changes, particularly if other legislation applying to their sector differs from the new forest legislation in fact or interpretation – a frequent occurrence. For example, officials of the agriculture, transport or environment ministry may say, in effect "I realize that the forest law requires *X*, but the legislation under which I am employed does not require me to enforce that, or may even require that I do something directly contrary to it". Such issues can only be addressed in the context of a targeted policy dialogue with the main sectors affecting forests, aiming at policy coherence.

Aligning institutions with forest policy

New or revised forest policies often have an impact on institutional frameworks and can provide the impetus to review, modernize and update them. In some instances a new forest policy also foresees changes in the distribution of rules, rights and responsibilities for forest management and use. When countries move towards devolution or decentralization, for example, adjustments to the institutional and organizational set-up are required to bring it in line with the new direction – as happened when China devolved land use rights and forest ownership to individual households. Some countries have established independent bodies or commercial enterprises to manage public forests. New Zealand took privatization one step further when the government disbanded the Ministry of Forestry, the Forest Service and the Forest Research Institute after changing its forest policy in the 1990s. In several countries a new forest policy was used to introduce participatory forest management.

Institutional change requires changes in paradigms and beliefs, not just changes in formal rules or organizational charts.

Institutions and institutional frameworks refer not only to formal rules, rights and responsibilities, and they extend beyond organizations *per se*. Above all, it is the underlying paradigms and related unwritten norms and beliefs that determine how rules and regulations are set and how individuals and organizations apply them. Such paradigms and mind-sets have changed over recent decades (Table 3). Moreover, in many instances, well-established informal rules have supplanted or remained parallel to formal ones, with which they are sometimes incompatible – for example, written laws versus customary rights governing the use of land and forest resources; or rules pertaining to formal voting systems versus patronage networks.

The functions and operations of forest administrations and government agencies have substantively changed over the years and continue to change. Many were established primarily to manage forests for timber and to enforce legislation. Over time, administrations and agencies have increasingly taken up more functions, especially in terms of communicating with and involving a broad range of stakeholders and government authorities outside forestry in policy implementation. As a consequence, there is a need for forest organizations to

TABLE 3
Changing paradigms and related institutional frameworks, 1950–2000

Period	Main goals of forest policy	Main thrust or paradigm	Functions and structures
1950s	Exploit or use what grows under natural conditions (for example, logging natural forests) and safeguard future timber supplies for strategic reasons	Exclude others from exploiting the resources	Use of the hierarchical structure of organizations to police resources
1970s	Improve resources (invest in management and create assets such as planted forests)	Build resources using inputs such as land, labour, capital	Organization focused on resource management, with emphasis on technical and managerial skills
1990s	Empower/support other players – e.g. the private sector, communities, farmers – to develop and manage resources	Create enabling conditions for other players to manage resources efficiently	Organizations capable of responding to needs of various stakeholders by using negotiation, facilitation and conflict resolution skills

Source: Adapted from Nair, 2008.

reorient themselves and to develop new capacities so that they can deliver new services and functions.

Institutional change is needed if current approaches are not people-centred enough, focus too narrowly on the forest sector, require new capabilities to deliver different functions or are performed unsatisfactorily. Change may be needed to ensure that the institutional framework is compatible with new policies, contributes more effectively to development and is sized to fit its new role. In the recent past, institutional change has often been driven by the wish or need to enhance stakeholder participation in policy choices and programme implementation; to separate State and private-sector functions more clearly; to decentralize power and responsibility to local structures; and to substitute top-down decision-making with dialogue and collaboration.

The process of creating institutional change can be organized along similar lines to the one used to develop forest policy. Basic questions cover essentially three dimensions:

- Are the right structures in place? Do these allow a consistent follow-up of forest policy? Are responsibilities clear, with no gaps or overlaps? Are the roles of State, parastatal and non-governmental organizations appropriate? Is delivery of services efficient and effective? Are mechanisms in place for monitoring and for providing and integrating feedback? Does the institutional structure provide stability but also flexibility? Can it balance interests?
- Are the right goals, strategies and principles in place? Are organizations and their leaders committed to achieving the new forest policy vision and goals? Are they people-centred and willing to embrace partnership approaches? Are the organizations able to contribute sustainably to national development?
- Are the right capacities in place? Do organizations and their employees have the proper skills to perform the services for which they are responsible?

Is the budget adequate? Can prioritization address limited or decreasing budgets? Is decentralization or outsourcing sufficiently supported? Are incentives adequate for the staff in the organizations?

Ideally, changes in paradigms, values and beliefs in institutions and organizations would improve service delivery in a cost-effective way and help to fulfil broader social, economic and environmental objectives that cannot be met more efficiently through alternative arrangements. However, these changes are difficult to make and take time. Leadership, determination and persistence are required to counteract the impulse to maintain the status quo, to persuade those who resist change to come on board, and to make fundamental rather than superficial changes to organizational structures. These aspects often touch the interests of powerful groups, individuals and informal networks within and across organizations, and thus must be addressed.

Adapting institutions mainly involves developing capacities of people and orienting rules (rights and duties) and organizations towards achieving the goals of the forest policy.

Often, a crisis will drive change and bring a new sense of reality to the values, paradigms and functions held by stakeholders. However, institutional development is ideally a continuous process of proactive adaptation. As adaptation happens in specific contexts and results are partially predictable, it is widely believed that successful institutional change comes through experimentation by those involved. External support might help to start or support the process but may not drive institutional innovations or changes in beliefs. Three approaches are frequently used to help institutions better respond to changing needs and contexts: differentiating functions to be performed among different bodies (e.g. between forest administration and state forest management); sharing rights and duties (e.g. through public-private partnerships); or full outsourcing (transferring property rights, decentralization, devolution, purchase of services to the private sector).

In most cases, the forest administration must fulfil considerable new tasks – at all levels – as it engages with a multitude of owners and service providers. Changing mind-sets and building capacity are long-term endeavours which require significant investment. It is therefore critical to identify and address the capacity-building needs of those responsible for implementing the new forest policy at various levels, including private stakeholders. Some countries assess capacity needs during the policy development process, while others formulate programmes or strategies as part of implementation efforts, taking into account the need to strengthen the capacity of government and non-government bodies at the local level to fulfil the roles and responsibilities expected of them.

MAINTAINING A DIALOGUE DURING IMPLEMENTATION

Forest policies can provide solid and valuable guidance over time if they cover the most relevant topics and issues of a country over the long-term and if the assessment of possible future developments is realistic. However, implementation of forest policies requires accommodation and adjustment to complex realities, new challenges, new needs and new initiatives. It is thus of central importance to maintain a national

process, such as an NFP platform or forum, to coordinate, develop and adjust operational aspects of new policies, as Austria, Cambodia, Ghana, Liberia, Pakistan, Paraguay, Uganda, Viet Nam and others have done. This approach not only helps to ensure that parties stay engaged, but also provides an opportunity to negotiate details, adjustments and extensions of the agreement. Moreover, a continuous dialogue among stakeholders allows for monitoring, review and amendment of the forest policy, as warranted. In this way, the policy remains a dynamic agreement that continues to be relevant.

NFP platforms such as national forest forums are a key mechanism for coordinating, communicating and promoting implementation of the forest policy.

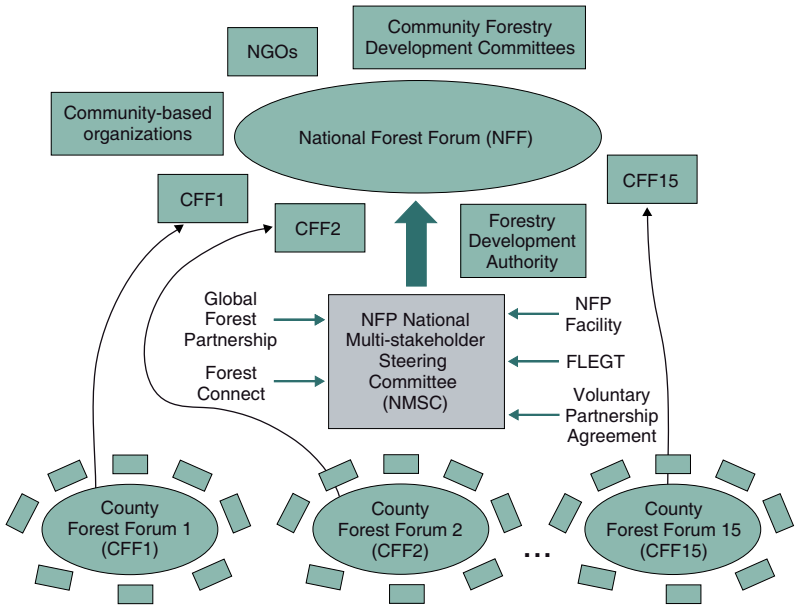
A new forest policy will have considerable influence on work plans, projects and budgets and, to some extent, can guide government and stakeholders in their day-to-day decisions on a multitude of tactical and operational issues. Continuous dialogue provides the opportunity to discuss operational issues on an ongoing basis, coordinate implementation and feed experience back into the process. There will be cases where it will not be feasible to put an agreed solution into practice either because government policies have changed or because new information was not available at the time a decision was made. In other instances, pressure might need to be exerted to persuade a party to take action or to identify alternative ways to conform to the agreement. Such issues can often be addressed bilaterally. When several stakeholders are involved or when progress can take place only after further discussion (including with other sectors and donors), meetings or workshops can be a more suitable venue for promoting a particular topic and its implementation or for moderating conflict. Last, but not least, forums or platforms for continuous dialogue in forest policy implementation are an invaluable way to foster learning among all involved.

National forest forums or similar arrangements associated with a forest policy process are also useful mechanisms for mobilizing resources and forging alliances for financing. In The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, for example, round tables were organized to inform and align donors and to garner financial support to implement new policy. Forest financing strategies can also be developed in the context of such mechanisms.

Forest policies are also meant to guide and build the framework for new initiatives by the international and national communities and donors. The priorities and "fit" of such initiatives in the framework set by the forest policy, and ways to involve stakeholders, can be addressed by creating a more permanent arrangement for discussing the forest policy process. Liberia, for example, established its NFP platform – the National Forest Forum and the related Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee – explicitly in such a way that these bodies can in effect also serve as the steering bodies of a range of other forest-related initiatives (Figure 9). This set-up is geared towards enabling higher consistency of forest policy and other forest-related initiatives, and also towards better integration beyond the forest sector.

Effective communication is another way to mobilize support to implement a new forest policy, especially if it touches the everyday lives of people who,

FIGURE 9
Liberia's National Forest Forum arrangement



for example, collect non-wood forest products, work in the wood industries or tend forests and trees as small-scale farmers. The degree to which the new policy is understood and the extent to which this understanding is widespread are indications of how well the participatory process functioned. Many countries have made significant efforts to communicate their new forest policies, for example, through meetings in villages, talk radio and easy-to-read colour brochures of the major changes, in local languages. Viet Nam, for example, conducted a massive campaign to make villagers across the country aware of the opportunities available to them as a result of the revised forest policy. Since policy development is an iterative process, individuals can learn about changes at different points in time. Thus, communication must consistently repeat the vision or strategy over time so that everyone hears the same message, the same mission and the same objectives. It is also important that communications address the question "what is in it for me?" and improve access to government information.

FAO/22135/H.Wagner

7. Conclusions and outlook

> No … policy – no matter how ingenious – has any chance of success if it is born in the minds of a few and carried in the hearts of none.
>
> **H. Kissinger**

A national forest policy provides the basis for sustainable forest management. It guides present and future decisions, determines actions and provides direction over a period of time. Ideally, a national forest policy – adopted by government – is a shared vision on forests and trees and their use, negotiated by government and stakeholders.

Many countries develop or revise forest policies to keep abreast of changing circumstances and to enhance the value of forests to society. Almost twice as many countries issued forest policy statements in the 2000s as in the 1990s (FAO, 2010). Each year, on average, numbers increase by more than ten. Many lessons have emerged from these country experiences.

Countries that identify and seize opportunities to adapt their forest policies to newly emerging realities can reap benefits that are not available to others. To be successful, forest policies must keep pace with rapid global change; foresee future developments over a ten-year span or more; address key societal issues within the broader and longer-term national development agenda; and be based on sound information.

In many respects, the triple challenges of food security, energy security and climate security open up possibilities for a wide array of forest-based solutions for a sustainable "green" economy. However, forest administrations will not be able to overcome the challenges or fully capture emerging opportunities unless they address issues from the broader perspective of land use and natural resource management and unless they involve all relevant stakeholders.

A key lesson for a successful policy appears to be that the process (how, why and by whom it was developed) is at least as important as its content. A process that is inclusive and creates a sense of ownership and responsibility for joint implementation fares well, but such processes are not simple and are likely to engender conflict, take longer and cost more. However, without stakeholder buy-in, even the most technically sound policy statements are quickly forgotten. Similarly, the best forest policy serves little purpose unless it is followed up with concrete actions, adjusted as the need arises and supported by effective institutional arrangements and legislation.

Given the critical need to monitor, review and amend national forest policy to keep pace with society's changing expectations and to meet new demands, including those resulting from international commitments, a permanent process or

platform for dialogue among stakeholders is key to ensure effectiveness over the long term. Such a mechanism allows for continuous adaptation and fine-tuning of the policy and its implementation. It also facilitates the coordination of new and emerging forest-related initiatives and promotes better integration of forest issues across sectors. In this way, the forest policy remains relevant and provides valuable guidance.

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Annex 1
Examples of Tables of Contents of forest policy statements

Bhutan: National Forest Policy 2009

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT
   - 1.1 The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan
   - 1.2 Evolution of forest policy and legislation
   - 1.3 Bhutan 2020 and Gross National Happiness
   - 1.4 Status and classification of Bhutan's forests
   - 1.5 Bhutan's International forest related commitments

2. POLICY STATEMENTS
   - 2.1 Principles of the National Forest Policy
   - 2.2 National Forest Policy Goal
   - 2.3 Policy Objectives
   - 2.4 Sustainable management of Government Reserve Forests
   - 2.5 Forest use and priorities
     - 2.5.1 Production forests
     - 2.5.2 Nature conservation
     - 2.5.3 Watershed management
     - 2.5.4 Social forestry
     - 2.5.5 Forest based industries
   - 2.6 Institutional arrangements

Liberia: National forestry policy and implementation strategy 2006

PART 1: NATIONAL FORESTRY POLICY

1. Introduction
- 1.1 Contribution of the forestry sector to the national economy

2. Previous and existing policies and legislation
- 2.1 National legislation
- 2.2 International commitments

3. Development of the forestry policy
- 3.1 Guiding principles
- 3.2 Technical work and public consultations

4. National forestry policy statement
- 4.1 Aim
- 4.2 Objectives
- 4.3 Implementation strategy

PART 2: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

5. Strategy for commercial forestry
- 5.1 Forest concession management
- 5.2 Reforestation and forest plantation development
- 5.3 Modernization of the wood processing industry

6. Strategy for community forestry
- 6.1 Community forest management
- 6.2 Bushmeat and hunting
- 6.3 Wood energy and non-wood forest products

7. Strategy for forest conservation
- 7.1 Wildlife and protected area management
- 7.2 Management of wetlands and mangroves
- 7.3 Development of ecotourism and nature tourism

8. Cross-cutting activities
- 8.1 Land tenure, ownership and land use planning
- 8.2 Public administration
- 8.3 Research, information, education and training
- 8.4 Legislation and law enforcement

Trinidad and Tobago: National Forest Policy 2008 Revision

1.0 INTRODUCTION
- 1.1 Justification and background
- 1.2 State of forests
  - 1.2.1 Status of forest and wildlife resources
  - 1.2.2 Current and potential uses of forest resources
  - 1.2.3 Forest ownership and institutional arrangements
  - 1.2.4 Forest management regimes
- 1.3 Issues and main drivers of change

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT
3.0 SCOPE AND PURPOSE
4.0 VISION
5.0 GOAL
6.0 PRINCIPLES AND VALUES
7.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES
8.0 POLICIES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES
- 8.1 Contribution of forest resources to livelihoods
  - 8.1.1 Extractive uses
  - 8.1.2 Non-extractive uses
- 8.2 Enhancing native genetic, species and ecosystem diversity
- 8.3 Maintaining and enhancing the natural productivity of forest ecosystems and ecological processes (watershed function etc.) to provide important ecosystem services

9.0 POLICIES TO GUIDE IMPLEMENTATION
- 9.1 Land use and physical development planning
- 9.2 Management arrangements
- 9.3 Participatory management
- 9.4 Conflict management
- 9.5 Legislation
- 9.6 Harmonising policies
- 9.7 Technical instruments
- 9.8 Financial mechanisms
- 9.9 Capacity building
- 9.10 Research
- 9.11 Knowledge sharing and knowledge management
- 9.12 Livelihood development
- 9.13 Education and awareness
- 9.14 Technical support (extension)
- 9.15 Regional and international programmes
- 9.16 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

GLOSSARY
APPENDIX 1: KEY NATIONAL POLICIES, LAWS AND PLANS AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Annex 2
Examples of vision or goal statements and principles

Canada
***A vision for Canada's forests: 2008 and beyond* (2008): Vision**
To be the best in the world in sustainable forest management and a global leader in forest sector innovation.

The Gambia
***National Forest Policy* (1995): Goals**
The main goals of the national forest policy are:

a) To reserve, maintain and develop forest land resources covering at least 30 percent of total land area which is capable of environmental protection through:
   - minimizing soil desiccation and soil erosion,
   - improving, conserving and preserving biodiversity,
   - maintaining river bank stability (mangroves),
   - protecting the swamp lands.

b) To ensure that 75 percent of forest lands are managed and protected according to forest management principles in order to increase forest resource base.

c) To ensure that sufficient supply of forest produce needed by both urban and rural population is available through the rehabilitation of forest lands and the establishment of fast growing plantations and woodlots.

Nicaragua
***Política de Desarrollo Sostenible Del Sector Forestal De Nicaragua* (2008): Vision**
Nicaraguan families improve their quality of life, by adaptively and gradually and jointly (in an associative/collaborative manner) establishing a sustainable model of use and management of forests, agroforestry and sustainable agribusiness, coordinated with other actors of the rural and non-rural, national and international, value chains, supported by the conservation of the environment and the national sustainable production of food security and sovereignty under a focused land planning approach.

Nigeria

***National Forest Policy* (2006): Principles**

The following general principles guide the New National Forest Policy. These principles are based on the government reform agenda, of poverty reduction and good governance. Specifically the principles are based on the need to:

- address the factors affecting the decline of the forest resources.
- streamline the contribution of forests to economic development and growth particularly the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) whose four key strategies are – reorienting values, reducing poverty, creating wealth and generating employment.
- mobilize the community and civil society in forestry development.
- to promote partnerships with the private sector, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs).
- address transparency and in the tendering administration for forest concessions and to encourage long-term concessions.
- accommodate the international forest policy initiatives, the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel in Forests (IPF) and on Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) proposals for action for a sustainable forest management.
- mainstream forestry activities into the Millennium Development Goals.

Paraguay

***Politica Forestal Nacional* (2007): general objective**

Optimizing the contribution of the forestry sector to promote economic growth in Paraguay on a sustainable basis by increasing the economic, social and environmental goods and services from forests in the country, harmonizing and coordinating the forest policy with the environmental policy and with other national sectoral policies, and through continuous adjustment with the participation of public and private sectors.

South Africa

***White Paper on Sustainable Forest Development* (1996): general objective**

The overall goal of Government is to promote a thriving forest sector, to be utilised for the lasting benefit of the nation and developed and managed to protect the environment. This goal will be pursued by wide participation in formulating and implementing policy and plans for forestry, which will be developed to facilitate the role of people in communities, the private sector, and Government.

The Sudan

***Revised Forest Policy Statement of Sudan* (2005): Vision**

Forestry resources will be used in a wise, efficient and sustainable manner according to the values and in response to the needs of the people of the Sudan, thus creating jobs and opportunities for trade that will help eradicate poverty, achieve food

security and bring about improvements to the country's physical environment. This will be achieved through the participation of all key stakeholders, and will result in a greener Sudan, the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of resources for the benefit of all present and future generations of the country. Provisions of environmental and public goods rest under the responsibility of the governmental institutions. Production of market goods will be carried out, in all possible cases, under competitive and sustainable management regulations by the private sector.

Suriname

***National Forest Policy* (2005): main forest policy objective**

Enhancing the contribution of the forests to the national economy and the welfare of the current and future generations, taking into account the preservation of the biodiversity.

Uganda

***Forest Policy* (2001): vision and goal**

Vision: A sufficiently forested, ecologically stable and economically prosperous Uganda.

Goal: An integrated forest sector that achieves sustainable increases in the economic, social and environmental benefits from forests and trees by all the people of Uganda, especially the poor and vulnerable.

United Kingdom

***The Scottish Forestry Strategy* (2006): vision**

By the second half of this century, people are benefiting widely from Scotland's trees, woodlands and forests, actively engaging with and looking after them for the use and enjoyment of generations to come. The forestry resource has become a central part of our culture, economy and environment.

***England Forestry Strategy* (2007): General objective**

It is 2050, and England's trees, woods and forests are helping us to cope with the continuing challenge of climate change and are also valued because many more people now enjoy using them. Trees are not just an important part of England's history, but an essential feature of a modern, sustainable society, which has significantly reduced carbon emissions.

Annex 3
Further reading

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Odugbemi, S. & Jacobson, T., eds. 2008. *Governance reform under real world conditions – citizens, stakeholders and voice.* Washington, DC, USA, World Bank.

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WEB SITES

FAO Forestry; Policy and institutions; National forest programmes: www.fao.org/forestry

NFP Facility: www.nfp-facility.org

Collaborative Partnership on Forests, Funding for sustainable forest management: www.fao.org/forestry/cpf/sourcebook

FAO EASYPOL, On-line resource materials for policy making: www.fao.org/easypol

World Bank Program on Forests (PROFOR), Knowledge and tools: www.profor.info/profor/node/knowledge_tools

World Bank, Poverty and inequality analysis: www.worldbank.org/psia

International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Power tools for policy influence in natural resource management: www.policy-powertools.org

Eldis Resource Guide on Governance, www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/governance

Governance and Social Development Resource Centre: www.gsdrc.org

Evidence-Based Policy in Development Network: www.ebpdn.org

Overseas Development Institute (UK), Resources: www.odi.org.uk/resources

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FAO FORESTRY PAPER

Developing effective forest policy

A guide

Many countries develop or revise forest policies to keep abreast of changing circumstances and to enhance the value of forests to society. Experience from these processes shows that substantial changes have occurred in the past 20 years in both the content of forest policies and the ways in which they are developed or revised. This guide aims to support countries in planning and conducting forest policy development processes. Based on a review of practical experiences, it outlines the rationale and purpose of a national forest policy and the different elements of the forest policy development process. This publication will help senior officials in government administrations and other stakeholder representatives, including civil society organizations and the private sector, in developing or revising national forest policy. Through this publication and related capacity-building support, FAO hopes to contribute to the development of forest policies that, based on emerging trends and broad agreement among stakeholders, can affirm and enhance the value and sustainable contributions of forests to society.

ISBN 978-92-5-106607-2 ISSN 0258-6150
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I1679E/1/07.10/1200